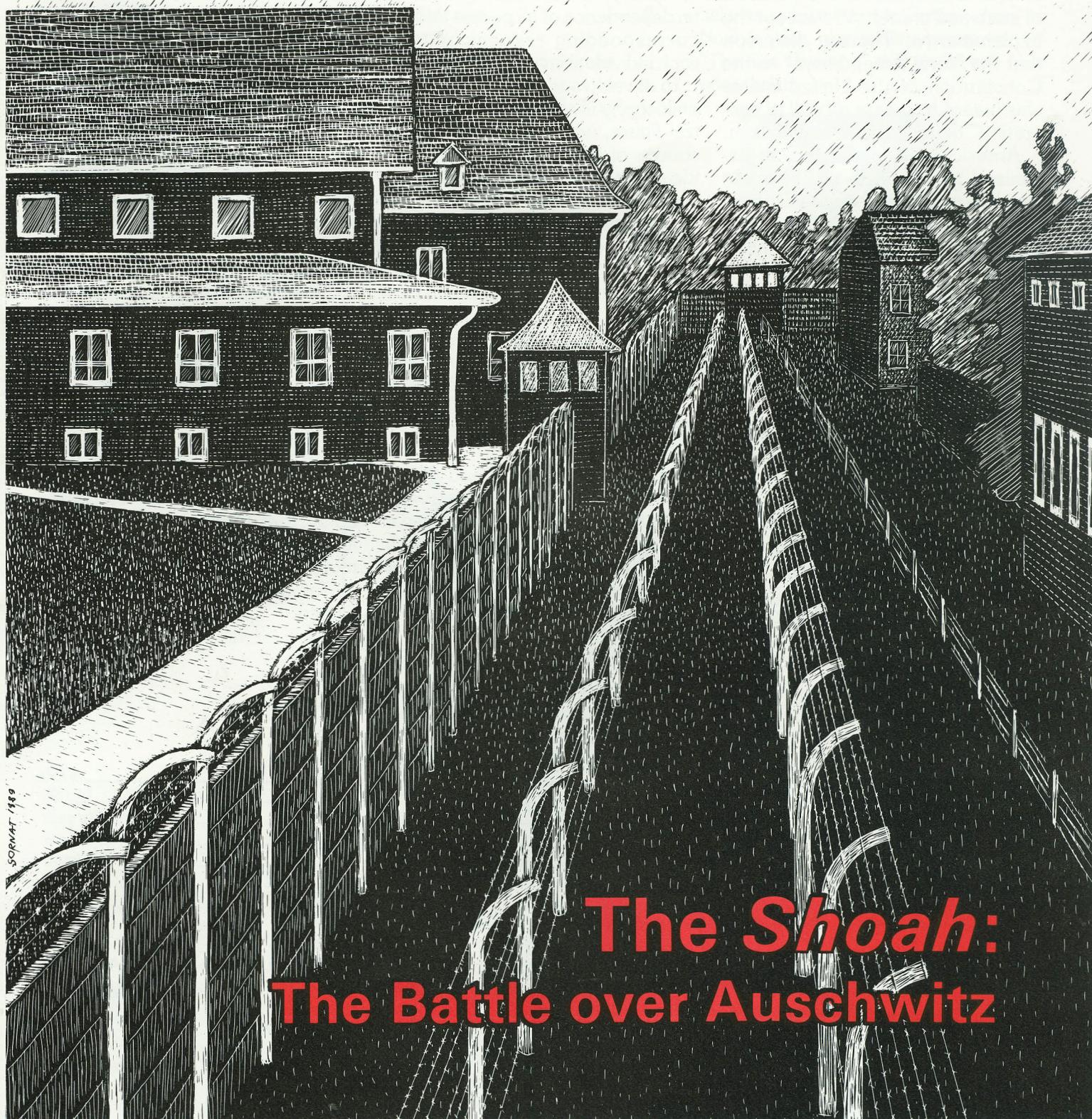


American Atheist

August 1989

A Journal of Atheist News and Thought

\$2.95



**The Shoah:
The Battle over Auschwitz**



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is a nonprofit, nonpolitical, educational organization dedicated to the complete and absolute separation of state and church. We accept the explanation of Thomas Jefferson that the "First Amendment" to the Constitution of the United States was meant to create a "wall of separation" between state and church.

American Atheists, Inc. is organized to stimulate and promote freedom of thought and inquiry concerning religious beliefs, creeds, dogmas, tenets, rituals, and practices;

to collect and disseminate information, data, and literature on all religions and promote a more thorough understanding of them, their origins, and their histories;

to advocate, labor for, and promote in all lawful ways the complete and absolute separation of state and church;

to advocate, labor for, and promote in all lawful ways the establishment and maintenance of a thoroughly secular system of education available to all;

to encourage the development

and public acceptance of a human ethical system stressing the mutual sympathy, understanding, and interdependence of all people and the corresponding responsibility of each individual in relation to society;

to develop and propagate a social philosophy in which man is the central figure, who alone must be the source of strength, progress, and ideals for the well-being and happiness of humanity;

to promote the study of the arts and sciences and of all problems affecting the maintenance, perpetuation, and enrichment of human (and other) life;

to engage in such social, educational, legal, and cultural activity as will be useful and beneficial to members of American Atheists, Inc. and to society as a whole.

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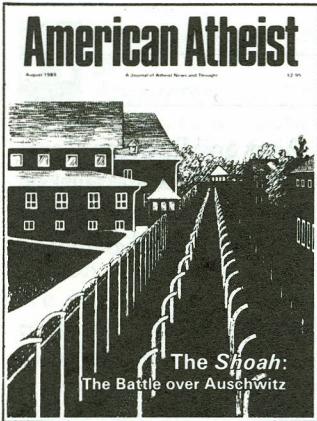
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American Atheist

A Journal of Atheist News and Thought

August 1989



Cover art and design by Czeslaw Sornat.

Editor's Desk R. Murray-O'Hair

Director's Briefcase Jon G. Murray

Despite what the Constitution may say, Southern football fans want to "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ball" at public high school football games.

Here's to Blasphemy Victoria Branden

Should the various religions be treated with respect? Not when they have so fully failed to be a positive force for the human race.



Divine Racism Derek Robert

Slavery existed long before Islam and Christianity became forces with which we needed to reckon. But the two new persuasions still managed not only to condone that institution but to add something new to it: racism.

The Shoah: Hope Springs Eternal Madalyn O'Hair

Jews are battling Roman Catholics over the ownership of Auschwitz — but forgetting that the real fight should be to expose the Vatican's support of the Nazi regime.

Volume 31, No. 8

Austin, Texas

August 1989

3 Talking Back 38

Are all Atheists communists? That question has been used to abuse non-believers since the McCarthy era. Now Atheists give some answers to "The Red Question" that would surprise theists.



American Atheist Radio Series 39 Madalyn O'Hair

A look at the official records of lives of Jesus Christ and his mother turn up "New Testament Forgeries" and outrageous lies.

19 Poetry 42

Under the Covers 43

The founder of psychoanalysis once called himself a "godless Jew." Now a slim but fact-filled volume portrays "Freud — as Scientist and Atheist."

Me Too 45

A World War II veteran and former prisoner of war discusses "Atheists in Foxholes" and disputes the myth that men in war turn to any god for help.

Letters to the Editor 46

Classified Advertisements 48

Page 1

American Atheist

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Last name _____

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This is to certify that I am in agreement with the "Aims and Purposes" and the "Definitions" of American Atheists. I consider myself to be Materialist or Atheist (i.e., *non-theist*) and I have, therefore, a particular interest in the separation of state and church and American Atheists' efforts on behalf of that principle.

I usually identify myself for **public** purposes as (check one):

<input type="checkbox"/> Atheist	<input type="checkbox"/> Objectivist	<input type="checkbox"/> Agnostic
<input type="checkbox"/> Freethinker	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethical Culturalist	<input type="checkbox"/> Realist
<input type="checkbox"/> Humanist	<input type="checkbox"/> Unitarian	<input type="checkbox"/> I evade any reply to a query
<input type="checkbox"/> Rationalist	<input type="checkbox"/> Secularist	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

I am, however, an Atheist and I hereby make application for membership in American Atheists, said membership being open *only* to Atheists. (Those not comfortable with the appellation "Atheist" may not be admitted to membership but are invited to subscribe to the *American Atheist* magazine.) Both dues and contributions are to a tax-exempt organization and I may claim these amounts as tax deductions on my income tax return. (This application must be dated and signed by the applicant to be accepted.)

Signature _____ Date _____

Membership in American Atheists includes a free subscription to the monthly journal *American Atheist* and the free monthly *American Atheist Newsletter* as well as all the other rights and privileges of membership. Please indicate your choice of membership dues:

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American Atheists, Inc., P. O. Box 140195, Austin, TX 78714-0195

Little orphan theism

Horrors! Religion has no place to go!

Apparently, all those statistics about the churches owning 25 percent of privately owned American property were not worth the ledger sheets on which they were figured. Either that or all those churches we Atheists think we see on practically every street corner are so structurally unsound that the roofs would simply collapse if exposed to any joyful noises made unto the lord.

Church land? Well, those accountants who added up church wealth in the last few decades must have made yet another mistake on this score. There really can't be any.

The office space glut that we heard about must have been just so much nonsense, because theist societies and clubs seemingly cannot even find space to lease or rent.

And, evidently, religion cannot even be practiced in private homes, either. Could it be because the radon with which our houses are supposed to be filled has an explosive effect when mixed with the holy ghost or the spirit of the god of one's choice?

Nonsense you say? Religion has a home of its own?

But then why is there all this fuss about the Judeo-Christian tradition's being tossed out of the public sector?

From all the caterwauling, I would have thought that there was no safe place for prayer but football games and city council meetings. Christians fight pitifully for the right not to be denied the chance to say their prayers at otherwise secular proceedings and go on about the fact that if they are denied the chance to belt out their supplications at school and government functions, they will be denied the right to pray at all.

I just came to the natural conclusion that they had no place else to go, that all those buildings that looked like churches must be oddly shaped skating rinks or

something.

And what else could I think but that Christians and Jews had no place else to set those crèches and menorahs than in state capitols and city halls. Why, all that church land I keep hearing about must be church landfills, because apparently it's no fit place on which they may place religious displays. The religious instead have to beg space from the government.

Of course, churches and synagogues wouldn't even think of renting space to put on their Sabbath shows instead of having to plead for meeting space at schools, universities, city buildings, etc. Why? My conclusion was that all those empty office and retail buildings I thought I saw in most metropolitan areas were really not for rent. I guess they must be some sort of modern monuments to the real estate industry, because those poor churches can't use them at all and are simply forced into local governments' arms instead.

As to why sectarian displays cannot stay on the yards and in the homes of the religious instead of having to crouch, like homeless orphans, on the steps of city hall, I had only two theories. One was the aforementioned radon gas guess. The second was that despite the popular pollsters, there are actually no religious people. This second theory is based on two observations: (1) Christian radio stations are continually complaining about the lack of Christians and (2) the last several Decembers the number and complexity of seasonal displays in my own home city have decreased dramatically. The first conjecture was, of course, based on the presumption that there are plenty of god-addicts, but they just have some compelling reason not to practice their religion and set out their totems on their own personal property.

If the churches can't convince their own sheep to haul out the crosses, crèches, and menorahs once a year, what else can they do but run like frightened children to the all-protective skirts of Ma Government?

My meditations on the sad state of Judeo-Christianity in our nation today are brought on by Jon G. Murray's account in this month's "Director's Briefcase" of the decision in *Jager v. Douglas County School District* and the reactions to it. In that case, a federal appeals court came to the conclusion that high school football games were inappropriate venues for mandatory prayer sessions. The immediate reaction of religionists in the areas governed by that court, as well as in adjacent states, was to bemoan the loss of liberty of theists (in the geographical region in question theists means Christians).

Claiming a stunted freedom, a shortened Bill of Rights, is almost a reflex reaction of theists when reprimanded for intruding their own god-system into a public arena. It is a very clever one also. Nearly three decades after the school prayer decision, they are still getting media and political mileage out of wailing about "not being allowed to pray in school" — as if their kids are only physically capable of praying when forced to do so by a public school teacher.

In the football game prayer issue, we again find god-addicts using this stunted-freedom argument as if it had some relevance to the issue at hand. But there is a true art to using the stunted-freedom argument. One must offer it with a proper look of abused anguish — and then run before anyone really starts to think about it. If, for instance, state/church separationists and religionists were arguing over the passage of a law forbidding the practice of Christianity on private property, this argument might have some force. Such a law would, of course, result in a deprivation of freedoms, but does anyone, even a Christier, really believe that prayerful theists have nowhere else to go but public high school football games? That's a little like claiming that if one can't ride a horse in the state capitol building, one's not allowed to ride horses at all. *

R. Murray-O'Hair

Why go to an American Atheists Convention?

There are dozens of excellent reasons to come to the 1990 Convention of American Atheists in St. Petersburg, Florida, on April 13, 14, and 15, 1990 (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday). But let past American Atheist conventioners give their reasons for coming to a national meeting of American Atheists:

"I came to the convention because I am proud of Atheism, and everyone should have pride in himself."

— Manheim, Pennsylvania

"I wanted to meet people of like-mindedness to myself."

— Santa Clara, California

"Christians harassed me and said Atheists do not exist. I came to show we do exist, and we are right."

— Wichita, Kansas

"To let the 'real me' out, who has been stifled so long"

— Escondido, California

"Because I like to be around people of like mind and equal intelligence."

— Tucson, Arizona

"I am a committed aggressive Atheist."

— Atlanta, Georgia

"To add one more person to the convention to show that Atheism is alive and well, with people from across America."

— Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"I wanted to meet fellow Atheists."

— Milwaukee, Wisconsin

"Because I'm an American Atheist."

— Woodmere, New York

"We wondered how many other Atheists there were in the world, and we are delighted to be able to meet so many of them."

— Salt Lake City, Utah

"The convention gives me the courage and the motivation to get out and do things to promote the philosophy of Atheism and encourage support of the national group."

— Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Now aren't those the type of people you'd want to spend a weekend with? Join American Atheists on April 13-15 at the St. Petersburg Hilton and Towers (333 1st Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701).



Return form to: Convention Registration, American Atheists, P. O. Box 140195, Austin, TX 78714-0195
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It's before December 31, 1989. I'm signing up for registration(s) for _____ person(s) at \$50 per person.

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Praise the lord and pass the ball

The courts have had their say on prayers at high school football games. The reply from Southern communities is, "It isn't what the law says that matters, it's what our hearts feel."



A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and a second generation Atheist, Mr. Murray is a proponent of "aggressive Atheism." He is an anchorman on the "American Atheist Forum" and the president of American Atheists.

Jon G. Murray

When I was in junior and senior high school, like many pubescent teens, I was captivated by the sport of football.¹ The weekly pep rallies during the football season were something special at my school, as indeed I suspect they were for others of my age. The camaraderie, the team spirit, the young gladiators donning their brightly colored uniforms to strut their stuff for that special blossoming womanhood, are all remembrances of a time to have been savored. I enjoyed going to the games and wearing the spirit ribbons and joining in the staccato war cries led by the cheerleaders. When I went on to college, I attended the football games also. I knew the players' numbers, the plays, the moves, the statistics; taken all together the football season offered a welcome diversion from classes, books, lectures, and homework. In short, the football games of my school days were a welcomed and earned weekend retreat from the rigors of the classroom.

I do then personally understand what high school football means to the students, the faculty, the staff, and especially the parents in a given school district. This is particularly so in the South, as I understand from others. Team sports on the high school level in the South are a kind of social glue that binds students and teachers alike together and does help both through another year of school. I have personally only the experience of high school football in the South, as I left the region of the "Yankees," as my schoolboy friends would say, while in my elementary school years, but I trust the judgment of those who attended their high school years on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line.

¹For our friends in Europe and "Down Under," this is what you refer to as American "gridiron." What you call "football," we colonials (Americans) call "soccer." Ours is altogether a more uncouth sport — on the field, that is, soccer fans having us beat for unruly behavior in the stands.

My memories of high school football in the fall contain another recollection, more prominent in my mind, I suspect, than in the minds of my former classmates: that of the prayers associated with those games. In my high school, we had an invocation at the beginning of the pregame pep rallies, prior to the kickoff, over the public-address system at the stadium, and then again after the game with both teams on their knees, accompanied by both squads of cheerleaders, in the middle of the field, while the spectators filed out. The band often joined in this postgame prayer, but not always. This overt call for supposed divine assistance was something which I resented. It emphasized for me just how different from my peers that I really was, coming from an Atheist home. I felt alone and outcast, at the time: all of my classmates eagerly and instinctively joined in the invocations, heads bowed, while I stood erect taking in the colors and faces of the moment. They all seemed part of a whole from which I was excluded. They seemed, from my viewpoint then, to be like a big family who rejected those who did not fit the mold with an icy scorn. In one's formative years that can hurt. I realized that I was really the "normal" one and that they were all truly the "strange" ones, majority or not. Despite that realization, the scars of their razor-like stares still remain.

It is from that perspective that I can genuinely understand what a young man and his parents would have gone through in challenging the practice of pregame high school football prayers. In the South, a person who does not understand or appreciate the phenomenon of prayer is viewed as though he were straight out of the Twilight Zone. I would like to examine the issue of high school football prayers this month.

The United States Supreme Court, in May, let stand a January ruling by the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit banning organized prayer before football games in the states under its jurisdiction (Florida,



Georgia, Alabama). That case was *Jager v. Douglas County School District* (Nos. 87-8522, 87-8719, Jan. 3, 1989. United States Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit).

The Douglas County prayers

Let us go back to the beginning, which is always a good place to start. Kevin Douglas (Doug) Jager was attending Douglas County High School in suburban Douglasville, Georgia, in the fall of 1985. Douglas County lies just west of Atlanta, Georgia, along Interstate Highway 20; it is about twenty-five miles out of the megalopolis. Doug was a saxophonist in the marching band during his freshman year at Douglas County High and objected to the practice of pre-game invocations at home football games. His band membership made his attendance at games mandatory. Doug, his father William Jager, and his younger brother Mark are Native Americans. Doug Jager, now pursuing a physics degree as a student at Georgia Tech, described himself as an agnostic.² William Jager was then age fifty-two and working as a fireman at Fort McPherson in Atlanta. Like his son, he is a self-proclaimed agnostic.

As with most high schools in the jurisdiction of the Eleventh Circuit, Douglas County High School has a long history of prayers at its football games. Pregame invocations have been a tradition there since at least 1947. During the thirty-nine year period between 1947 and 1986, the invocation speaker was invited by the student government. He or she was introduced by an announcer over the stadium public-address system, with an identification as to any particular church affiliation. In 1950 the invocations began to be given by local ministers. The task of selecting which minister was delegated to a local Presbyterian clergyman in the early 1970s. Through 1986 this delegated minister recruited invocation speakers

by working with the Douglas County Ministerial Association. The Ministerial Association is a group of ordained clergy of exclusively Protestant Christian denomination. With few exceptions, every invocation delivered at a Douglas County High School football game between 1974 and 1986 was of the Protestant Christian flavor.

Just as one could anticipate, the majority of the invocations, particularly during the Jager years, made some reference to "Jesus Christ," whether in the text of the prayer or at its end with the traditional "in Jesus' name we pray" closing.

Doug Jager objected to the prayers to the principal of Douglas County High School. The principal passed on the protest to the band director, whose reaction was to give young Jager a lecture on the value of Christianity. This is known in legal parlance as "exhausting administrative remedies," which is a necessary prerequisite to suing over a state/church violation.

Then in June 1986 the Douglas County school superintendent, an attorney for the school system, the Jagers and their ACLU attorney, and two ministers representing the Douglas County Ministerial Association met to discuss alternative proposals for a modification of the invocation practices. There were two proposals, one calling for a secular "inspirational speech" instead of a prayer and the other being an "equal access" plan through which some religious content would be retained. The Jagers rejected the "equal access" plan, stating that they would only go with the secular speech. In response, the two Ministerial Association ministers came up with a compromise proposal. This alternative draft was to "perpetuate and regulate the traditional invocation as part of the opening ceremonies of school athletic events." This alternate "equal access" plan was that all school clubs and organizations could designate club members to give invocations. Any student, parent, or school staff member could also

seek to deliver an invocation. The student government was to have the responsibility of randomly selecting the invocation speaker from those designated or those volunteering. There would be no minister involved in either selecting or delivering the invocations and the school would not monitor the content of the prayer.

In August 1986, the Jagers agreed to consider the ministers' alternate draft as long as the game prayers were voluntarily ceased in the interim. In September 1986, the superintendent met with the principals of all the Douglas County high schools and decided to continue pregame invocations using the above described "equal access" plan. Subsequent to that meeting, the principals informed their schools that this plan would govern all future games. The Douglas County Board of Education never formally adopted any policy on pregame prayers. The superintendent and the principals decided, on their own, to go with the "equal access" plan of the two Ministerial Association members, and the plan was set directly into motion.

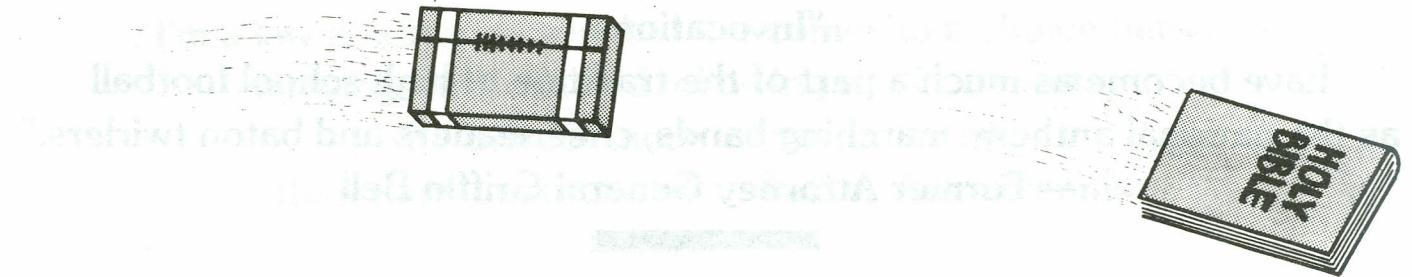
A court speaks

In response to the decision by the principals, the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit on behalf of the Jagers on September 19, 1986, in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. The district court granted the Jagers a temporary restraining order holding up the invocations prior to trial. The case came up for trial in November of 1986, though the decision was not rendered until February 3, 1987.

The district court held that the pre-game prayers were unconstitutional, denied plaintiffs' request for a permanent injunction, rejected plaintiffs' claim based on the free exercise of religion clause of the First Amendment, and rejected the claim that the school district violated the Georgia Constitution.

What does that mean? Well, the rul-

²New York Times, 8 January 1989, p. 2.



ing that the prayers in and of themselves were unconstitutional is clear. The denial of the injunction request simply meant that the invocations would continue at games throughout the appeals process. The Jagers would have had standard language in their original complaint claiming that the invocations violated the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment. The district court merely threw out the Free Exercise Clause claim in favor of the Establishment Clause. In other words, the court said that the invocations did not interfere, in its judgment, with any individual's free exercise of religion but that they may tend to establish religion.

After the district court ruling, the school district filed a Motion for Clarification. In response, the district court entered an additional order holding that the equal access plan was constitutional on its face and was not violative of the Establishment Clause, but it declined to make a determination as to whether or not the plan was unconstitutional as applied. At the same time, the court denied the Jagers any declaratory or injunctive relief related to the implementation of the equal access plan. That meant that the plan could be put into operation during any appeals process.

In June 1987, the district court did find that the Jagers were "prevailing parties" and were entitled to attorneys' fees. Those fees were awarded in August 1987 at an amount that was 25 percent less than that for which the Jagers had asked.

The district court decision was appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, primarily on the basis of the holding that the equal access plan was constitutional on its face. The rejection of any claim under the Free Exercise Clause was not appealed.

The court of appeals decided the case through application of the three-pronged analysis of *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (403 U.S. 602, 1971).³ The court said:

We must ask whether (1) the Douglas County School Superintendent and the school principals had a secular purpose for adopting the equal access plan, (2) the plan's primary effect is one that neither advances nor inhibits religion, and (3) the plan does not result in an excessive entanglement of government with religion.

The school district argued that the Lemon test did not apply. It contended that *Marsh v. Chambers* (463 U.S. 783, 1983)⁴ provided the standard for determination if the equal access plan violated the Establishment Clause. In the *Chambers* case, the Supreme Court had upheld the practice, in Nebraska, of commencing state legislative sessions with a prayer as constitutional, relying on the "unique history" of legislative prayer in this country. The court of appeals majority said that *Marsh*, because of its reliance on some two hundred years of history of legislative prayer, did not apply to the Jager case because the later case was among those involving the "special context of the public elementary and secondary school system" to which the Supreme Court "has been particularly vigilant in monitoring com-

pliance with the Establishment Clause"
(*Edwards v. Aguillard*, 482 U.S. 578, 107 S.Ct. 2573, 96 L.Ed.2d 510, 1989, at 2577).⁵

Endorsing a brand of Christianity

Using, therefore, a Lemon analysis, the court concluded first that the equal access plan violated the first prong of having a secular purpose. "Clearly, the equal access plan in the case at bar was adopted with the actual purpose of endorsing and perpetuating religion," opined the majority. It would have been difficult for the court of appeals to have found otherwise in light of the finding of the district court itself.

The district court found that pregame invocations serve four purposes: (1) to continue a long-standing custom and tradition, (2) to add a solemn and dignified tone to the proceedings, (3) to remind the spectators and players of the importance of sportsmanship and fair play, and (4) "to satisfy the genuine, good faith wishes on the part of a majority of the citizens of Douglas County to publicly express support for Protestant Christianity." (Emphasis added.)

The court of appeals was quick to point out that

The School District could serve all of its cited secular purposes by requiring wholly secular inspirational speeches about sportsmanship, fair play, safety, and the values of teamwork and competition.

The court went on to conclude that because the school district had turned

³"Every analysis in this area [Establishment Clause] must begin with consideration of the cumulative criteria developed by the Court over many years. Three such tests may be gleaned from our cases. First, the statute must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion, *Board of Education v. Allen*, 392 U.S. 236, 243, 88 S.Ct. 1923, 1926, 20 L.Ed.2d 1060 (1968); finally, the statute must not foster 'an excessive government entanglement with religion.' *Walz v. Tax Commission*, 397 U.S. 664, at 674, 90 S.Ct., at 1414."

⁴*Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602, at 612 and 613, 91 S.Ct. 2105 (1971).

⁵See "American Nightmare, The United States Supreme Court," *American Atheist*, September 1983, pp. 15-17.

⁵*Edwards v. Aguillard* is the landmark case involving the teaching of "Scientific Creationism" in the public schools of the state of Louisiana. See *American Atheist*, October 1987, p. 7.

"Invocations

have become as much a part of the tradition of high school football
as the national anthem, marching bands, cheerleaders and baton twirlers."
— Former Attorney General Griffin Bell

down a plan of secular speeches proposed by the Jagers:

[I]t is clear that the School District was most interested in the fourth purpose served by the invocations. That is, the School District wanted to have invocations that publicly express support for Protestant Christianity.

The court of appeals reaffirmed Supreme Court doctrine by going on at length to reiterate and support the fact that:

The unmistakable message of the Supreme Court's teachings is that the state cannot employ a religious means to serve otherwise legitimate secular interests. (*Karen B. v. Treen*, 653 F.2d 897, 901 [5th Cir. Unit A 1981]).

With regard to the primary effect prong of the *Lemon* test, the court of appeals found that:

When a religious invocation is given via a sound system controlled by school principals and the religious invocation occurs at a school-sponsored event at a school-owned facility, the conclusion is inescapable that the religious invocation conveys a message that the school endorses the religious invocation. See *Jaffree I*, 705 F.2d at 1534-45 ("The primary effect of prayer is the advancement of one's religious beliefs.").⁶

Concerning the entanglement prong of the *Lemon* test, the court of appeals found that, on its face, the equal access plan did not entangle the school district with religion. "Nonetheless, the lack of

entanglement cannot save the equal access plan because the plan violates the first two prongs of the *Lemon* test," said the majority.

So, in conclusion the appeals court reversed, 2 to 1, the district court order that the equal access plan was unconstitutional on its face and it affirmed the lower court's order declaring that the pregame invocations were unconstitutional. The appeals court also granted the Jagers an attorney's fee award in light of its holding in their favor.

As one might expect, the county school district appealed the appeals court decision to the Supreme Court. The appeal was drafted by former Attorney General Griffin Bell on behalf of the school district. Bell had been attorney general in the Carter administration from 1977 through 1979. He is a native Georgian, born in Americus, Georgia, and a longtime partner in a prestigious Atlanta law firm (King and Spalding).⁷ As he is a Baptist, I could see where he would be in favor of the pregame prayers. In his brief, Bell remarked that

Invocations have become as much a part of the tradition of high school football as the national anthem, marching bands, cheerleaders and baton twirlers.⁸

The Supreme Court, in a one-line order, denied the appeal, letting the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruling stand.

Back in Georgia

The immediate reaction to this move in Douglasville, Georgia, was typical. Douglas Jager was harassed at school, and the family home was besieged by threatening phone calls. The tires of

both Doug's and his mother's cars were slashed while parked in the family garage.

The reaction to the Supreme Court's denial of review on the appeals court decision was mixed among the three states under its jurisdiction, but there was a general undercurrent of resentment among Southerners at what they viewed as an unwarranted intrusion into their life-style. Religion, and its central ritual of prayer, have been a part of traditional Southern living for as long as our nation is old. This is particularly so in the rural areas of the Southern states affected by the Eleventh Circuit decision. One must then couple this with the sociological importance of high school football in rural and small town areas. In many parts of these states, there is only one high school in a given town, which is often also the county seat. These weekly football games, during the season, provide a social and recreational outlet for entire small communities. Virtually every family in the area served by a given county high school will have a youngster involved in the football game process, as a player, a band member, a cheerleader, a pep squad member, or a student, or will be related to school faculty or staff. High school sporting events are often the only thing going on in town, and the crowd is composed of persons who know one another on a first-name basis. Thus many rural high school games are more like weekly family reunions. Those who participate in them view the opening prayers in the same way as they would view saying a prayer over a Sunday dinner with family gathered around the dining room table. When a court, and particularly a federal court, steps in and says that they can no longer do what they have been doing in a rather intimate atmosphere for many years, locals look upon it as the "Big Brother" of a seemingly far-off government trying to control their lives.

Martha Morgan, a law professor at the University of Alabama Law School and a board member of the Civil Liber-

⁶*Jaffree v. Wallace*, 705 F.2d 1526 (11th Cir. 1983) affirmed, 472 U.S. 38, 105 S.Ct. 2479, 86 L.Ed.2d 29 (1985) ("Jaffree I").

⁷*Who's Who in America*, 42d ed., vol. 1 (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1982-83).

⁸*San Francisco Examiner*, 31 May 1989, sec. A, p. 2.

"I'm a law-abiding person, but if it comes to a choice between obeying the Lord and following the Constitution, the Bible is more important to me than the Constitution." — Pastor Allen Dennis

ties Union of Alabama, put the situation into perspective. She was quoted in the nationwide media as follows:

I am a Southerner and I think it is difficult of Southerners to appreciate the underlying issues because the South has been so overwhelmingly homogeneous in terms of religion. . . . It's hard for them to imagine themselves in the position of a person with minority religious beliefs, but the underlying purpose of the Bill of Rights is to protect minority rights.⁹

I can, therefore, understand exactly why the reaction to the Eleventh Circuit decision in the Jager case, and the Supreme Court confirmation thereof, manifested itself in the ways that it did.

A minister in Alabama put it in colloquial terms.

I'm a law-abiding person, but if it comes to a choice between obeying the Lord and following the Constitution, the Bible is more important to me than the Constitution.¹⁰

It is also worth noting a statistic here. According to the Bureau of Census, Alabama has 57.3 percent Christian church adherents in its population; Georgia is 51.3 percent and Florida 46.9 percent in Christian church participation.¹¹ This needs to be taken into account with regard to local response to a legal ban on pregame prayer.

To continue with the reaction, in a state by state analysis beginning with

Alabama, we should look at a couple of specific instances.

Down in Alabama

In Montgomery, Alabama (185,000 population),¹² which is not exactly a "small town," Mayor Emory Folmar and County Commission Chairman Bill Joseph walked onto the field at the beginning of the season opener between Robert E. Lee High School and Jess Lanier High, being played in the Cramton Bowl in that city, and led the crowd in prayer over the public address system from the 50-yard line.

Football is a tradition in Montgomery and in Alabama and in America. Prayer is a tradition here in Montgomery, in Alabama and in these United States.¹³ . . . We thank you Lord that we do live in a free land, a free land where we can pray. Bless us now, keep our players safe,¹⁴

said the mayor from the field. While Mayor Folmar (former chairman of the Alabama Republican Party) was leading the crowd in prayer, ten protesters in the stands blew air horns, jeered, and attempted to unfurl a banner. They were wearing T-shirts with such slogans as "The Constitution Rules" and "Church and State Don't Mix." Stadium police stopped them before they could unfurl their banner and seized their air horns. One of the protesters was arrested on the charge of "harassing police" when he put up a struggle, while the other nine were simply ejected from the stadium. The arrested protester, a local college student, spent about an hour in jail. Local police said that both air horns and banners are illegal in the city-owned

stadium. After the incident Mayor Folmar said, "I didn't know it was big news. We've been praying at football games for 50 years. I wasn't trying to make a point."¹⁵ He argued to reporters that his prayer was legal because he is independent of the school system and the game was played in a city-owned stadium, which is used for all Montgomery high school home games.¹⁶ The mayor also promised to pay any legal expenses, personally, to defend against any lawsuit which may arise out of his actions. "There won't be one dime of taxpayers' money spent," he said. "Our position is that we had no control. We had control over the game, but we have no control over the mayor," said the chairman of the Montgomery County Board of Education, the entity legally responsible for the game.¹⁷

The next week twenty-one ministers led spectators in a "silent prayer" from the press box at the Cramton Bowl.

On the same night as the confrontation with the mayor in Montgomery, in Childersburg, Alabama, about seventy miles north of Montgomery, some one hundred people led the rest of the fans in a "spontaneous" recitation of the Lord's Prayer at a game between B. B. Corner High School and Childersburg High.

In Sylacauga, Alabama (about sixty miles north of Montgomery), local preachers in the stands led the crowd of about three thousand in the Lord's Prayer. "We don't like what's been handed to us, and we're simply not gonna take it," said a Church of God pastor.¹⁸ The preachers continued the practice for weeks. "If we say prayers on our own in the bleachers, it would not

⁹New York Times, 2 September 1989, p. 8.

¹⁰Allen Dennis, pastor, Bethel Baptist Church, Columbiana, Alabama, Sacramento Bee, 2 September 1989, sec. A, p. 14.

¹¹U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 107th ed. (Washington, D.C.: 1987).

¹²1984 figure, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*.

¹³Indianapolis Star, 2 September 1989, sec. A, p. 19.

¹⁴Atlanta Constitution, 26 August 1989.

¹⁵St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch, 26 August 1989, sec. A, p. 7.

¹⁶Register-Guard, Eugene, Oregon, 26 August 1989, sec. A, p. 12.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Time magazine, date and page number unknown.



put the school district in jeopardy — it wouldn't put the monkey on their back," according to the logic of the Church of God pastor.¹⁹

Radio stations bring god to the bleachers

Even Alabama radio stations got into the act. WMJJ-FM radio in Birmingham, Alabama, led a statewide protest consisting of radio stations playing one-minute nondenominational prayers at 6:55 PM., just five minutes before kickoff time, every Friday evening during high school football season. High school football fans were asked to take their portable radios to the stadium and to turn the volume up all the way at the appropriate time. The general manager of WMJJ-FM claimed that the broadcasts were in response to the calls of listeners who, according to him, said that they

don't like what is happening and they want something done about it. This is our way of responding to that frustration.

The president of the Jefferson County Alabama school board (Birmingham is in Jefferson County) told reporters, "It's the kind of response we were hoping to get from the community."²⁰ "We've gotten a bigger response from this than we did with the flag thing,"²¹ said the program director of WKSJ-FM in Mobile, Alabama, making reference to the Supreme Court decision upholding flag burning as a form of First Amendment guaranteed free speech.

In Florida, the reaction to the Eleventh Circuit decision was a little less strident overall. The state Department of Education issued an advisory to attorneys representing school boards for sixty-seven school districts statewide which stated that the ban on pregame prayers was

indeed now "the law of the land," according to the department's general counsel. In Escambia County, in Florida's panhandle on the Alabama border north of Pensacola, ministers using blowhorns led the crowd in prayer at the annual football multi-team jamboree and girls in the stands wore black arm bands with white crosses on them, after school district officials banned prayer at all school activities to come into compliance with the Eleventh Circuit decision. The Escambia County School Board had been advised by counsel that, in his interpretation, the Eleventh Circuit ruling made the following activities unconstitutional:

- Invocations before athletic activities, awards, banquets, graduation ceremonies.
- Daily Bible reading, morning devotions, posting the Ten Commandments, reciting the Lord's Prayer or singing prayers at school.
- School sponsored baccalaureate services.

The following guidelines were suggested:

- Coaches, choir directors or other school employees and officials cannot lead students in prayer.
- Schools cannot sponsor religious-oriented student groups or clubs. A faculty member cannot sponsor such a club. The club photo cannot be in the yearbook. Club activities cannot be announced over the public-address system. The club cannot use school property for money-raising activities.
- Wearing clothing and jewelry with religious symbolism is allowed if it doesn't disrupt the educational process.²²

Meanwhile, over on Florida's Atlantic coast, the principal of Palm Bay High School (Palm Bay is just south of Melbourne, about thirty miles from the Kennedy Space Center) said that his school planned to go ahead with prayers because "there will be no reference to a deity of a specific religion."²³

Over on the Florida Gulf coast, the attorney for the Manatee County (Bradenton area, south of Tampa/St. Petersburg) School Board advised board members to prohibit prayers before football games and during graduation ceremonies. In Charlotte County (Port Charlotte area, north of Fort Myers), Florida, the schools' superintendent said,

We'll probably notify principals about the rules before the next school year when the football season begins. Had there not been a ruling on this, it probably wouldn't have come up in this region. It's been a standard thing in Southwest Florida for years.

In Sarasota County (Sarasota area, halfway between Tampa and Fort Myers), the school superintendent is not certain that his district's policy, in which prayers are said before games at the county's four high schools, needs to be changed. "It could be dissimilar enough not to justify any change."²⁴

To heck with the Supreme Court

In Georgia, home state to the Jager decision, seven school systems announced that they would have invocations at high school football games as usual despite the Supreme Court's allowing the Douglas County case to stand. This was after the Georgia School Board Association's general counsel had issued an advisory that the Eleventh

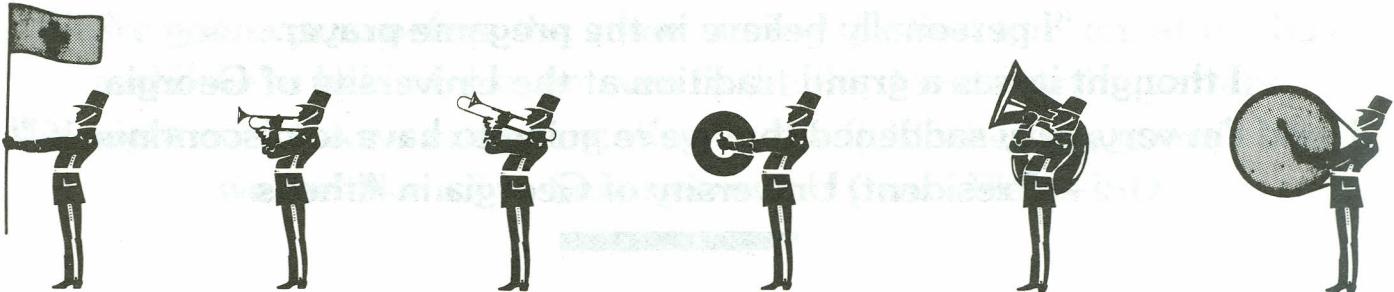
¹⁹New York Times, 2 September 1989, p. 8.

²⁰Washington Post, 14 September 1989.

²¹Arkansas Gazette, 25 August 1989.

²³Arkansas Gazette, 3 September 1989.

²⁴Sarasota Herald-Tribune, 20 April 1989, sec. B, p. 1.



Circuit decision was binding on all Georgia school districts. The association's memo read, in part:

[S]ince the law on this issue is thereby [Eleventh Circuit] established for all Georgia school districts, local school board members and school district officials who permit this practice are potentially subject to individual liability...²⁵

The systems that disregarded the ruling were those in Bleckley County (southeast of Macon and Warner Robins), Haralson County (on the Alabama border west of Atlanta), Pulaski County (just south of Bleckley County), Montgomery County (near Vidalia, halfway between Macon and Savannah, south of Interstate 16), Heard County (on the Alabama border just north of La Grange), Wilcox County (about halfway between Macon and Valdosta, just east of Interstate 75), and Thomaston City (about forty miles due west of Macon). In Polk County, Georgia, (surrounding Cedartown, fifty miles northwest of Atlanta), the school superintendent was warned by the district's insurance representative that the company may refuse to cover any punitive damages that could result from legal action.²⁶ The Cedartown School Board proceeded to vote 5 to 3 to abide by the appeals court ruling, but with reluctance. "This is the South, the Bible Belt — religion is a part of our life," said Cedartown High School's football coach.²⁷

The Georgia Constitution seems to bear the coach out in its Preamble which reads:

²⁵Walton Tribune, Monroe, Georgia, 9 June 1989, p. 1.

²⁶Atlanta Constitution, 29 August 1989, sec. D.

²⁷Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3 September 1989, sec. B, p. 4.

To perpetuate the principles of free government, insure justice to all, preserve peace, promote the interest and happiness of the citizen, and transmit to posterity the enjoyment of liberty, we the people of Georgia, *relying upon the protection and guidance of Almighty God*, do ordain and establish this Constitution. (Emphasis added.)²⁸

In Monroe, Walton County, Georgia (about forty miles east of Atlanta toward Athens), the county Board of Education voted to discontinue prayer before high school football games.

According to *Time* magazine, WQMT-FM in Chatsworth, Georgia (near Dalton, just south of the Tennessee border), like its counterparts in Alabama, broadcast prayers at weekly game times for fans to flaunt over their radios.

College football

The hodgepodge of compliance on the high school football scene does not end the controversy over prayer at sporting events in Georgia. What about football prayers on the college and university level? Well, three out of four of the Southeastern Conference universities in the states under Eleventh Circuit jurisdiction stopped pregame prayers without much hassle. The University of Florida and Auburn University (Alabama) stopped their prayers in 1989, and the University of Alabama stopped home game prayers three years ago.

The University of Georgia in Athens (UGA) had to go through more trial and error. Football game prayers have been traditional at the University of Georgia since the 1890s. The UGA president decided, at the time of the season opener against Baylor University (a Baptist school in Waco, Texas), to go ahead with the prayer. The Georgia attorney general had warned UGA that it was

running a "legal risk" in doing so, but the UGA president said,

I don't want to disobey the law, but I feel we're justified in going ahead with it. It's part of the tradition of Georgia football games. I want to do it, and I think a lot of the Georgia fans (who) want to do it.²⁹

He further added that

Football games . . . are supposed to be fun, and if we can do things that we think are right, that are going to please our fans, please the Georgia people and make them feel better about the game, then we're going to continue to do it.³⁰

The UGA prayer has been delivered by a student-athlete and not a local minister since 1977 when the school changed its policy in response to a complaint from a non-Christian fan. The prayer was also made supposedly nondenominational as well at that time. The football team's chaplain meets with the student-athlete before the game to go over guidelines for the prayer and offer advice.

The prayer, which was delivered by a female, Roman Catholic student-athlete, read as follows:

Heavenly Father, as we embark upon this academic year, a new chapter at the University of Georgia, we first pause to honor your presence with praise and thanksgiving.

We the students beseech your blessings for all those who will partake in this athletic celebration — ourselves, our families and our

²⁸Secretary of State's Office, The Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1976.

²⁹Atlanta Constitution, 15 September 1989, sec. A, p. 1.

³⁰Atlanta Constitution, 16 September 1989, sec. B, p. 1.

**"I personally believe in the pregame prayer.
I thought it was a grand tradition at the University of Georgia
and I'm very, very saddened that we're going to have to discontinue it."**

— President, University of Georgia in Athens

friends. We are grateful that you have allowed us to meet in this stadium again this year. We ask you to protect the players from injury and keep us in your hands as we return home.

Father, help us to let this game mark the beginning of an era of rededication to the true meaning of athletic competition: grace in victory, dignity in defeat, but more importantly, earnestly [sic] in our efforts and brotherhood even amongst competitors.

We ask this in your name, for with you all things are possible.³¹

"It's not like I'm trying to force-feed religion on people in the stands," she said about her prayer. "It's just my way of recognizing there is someone above."³²

The executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia immediately said about the prayer, "There is nothing non-denominational about starting with 'heavenly father' and ending with 'in his name.'" He continued,

It's a very monotheistic, traditionally Christian, paternalistic prayer. It's a prayer that's uttered by a small minority of the world's praying public.³³

The ACLU of Georgia then began to search for plaintiffs and threatened suit against the university.

Finally, the Georgia attorney general wrote a letter to the UGA president in which he said:

The . . . case out of Douglas County is in all likelihood indistinguishable from the situation at the university, and I do not believe we

could successfully defend pregame prayer at the University of Georgia home football games. I happen to be a religious person, but it's very, very private with me, and this is just doing my job. It's what the law says.³⁴

That was what it took for the UGA president to announce that there would be no more pregame prayers. The university president went down hard, harping all the way. He said at a press conference:

I personally believe in the pre-game prayer. I thought it was a grand tradition at the University of Georgia and I'm very, very saddened that we're going to have to discontinue it. I think the Georgia fans are going to be disappointed, but in an authoritative way the law has been laid out for us.

He also told reporters:

I would have liked to have gone to a moment of silence, but the strength of his [Georgia's attorney general] opinion on that issue, he told me, is the same as the strength of his opinion on pregame prayer itself.³⁵

The University of Georgia athletic director was also disappointed in the need to abandon the pregame prayers.

It was a decision the president felt he had to make, and of course I will support that decision. However . . . I believe the effects are far-reaching. The pregame prayer has been a longstanding tradition at the University of Georgia, but it has also been a great national tra-

dition all across the country.³⁶

The first-year football coach also expressed disappointment, but when asked about whether he intended to continue the team prayer before each game he said, "You bet. Ain't nobody told me I can't have a team prayer."³⁷

Georgia Tech, on the other hand, continues to have a pregame "moment of reflection" for the third consecutive football season. "It makes no reference to a deity. It talks about human improvement, higher aspirations of making the world better," says the Georgia Tech vice president for communications. Unlike the situation at the University of Georgia, when Georgia's attorney general wrote to the chancellor of the University System of Georgia (head of Georgia Tech), he opined that the courts have ruled that acceptable "secular purposes" advanced by pregame prayers "could be served by offering an inspirational speech instead of an invocation which has the effect of endorsing religion."³⁸

Elsewhere in Georgia, Albany State College has had no regular pregame prayer in five years, and Valdosta State College did away not alone with pregame prayer but also the private team prayer. Fort Valley State College and West Georgia College in Carrollton, Georgia, also stopped public prayer.

In Mississippi, a state not directly affected by the Eleventh Circuit ruling, school districts stuck to traditional plans for pregame prayers. In Jackson, Mississippi, the athletic director for the public schools opted to continue prayers over the public-address system until a local court challenge was made. He stated,

We're just doing what we've been

³¹Atlanta Constitution, 16 September 1989.

³²Ibid.

³³Atlanta Constitution, 19 September 1989, sec. B, p. 4.

³⁴Atlanta Constitution, 22 September 1989, sec. A, p. 1.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., sec. A, p. 15.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Atlanta Constitution, 23 September 1989, sec. B, pp. 1 and 7.

"We're gonna pray before the game, during the first quarter, at the half, and if we're behind, maybe even in the third and fourth quarters.

We might even have a prayer meeting on the field when the game's over if we feel like it." — Superintendent Cross Plains ISD

doing in the past. Traditionally, we always have a prayer before a game. Until I get some different instruction or direction, this is our unwritten policy.³⁹

A spokesman for the Mississippi attorney general's office said, "We don't know what local school districts are doing, but we advise them not to practice prayers during school functions." The Mississippi High School Activities Association, a statewide policy making organization for extracurricular activities, has no official policy on pregame prayer and reports that the issue had never been raised among its 269 members. The Mississippi Department of Education has also never received any complaints, so it has no policy or guidelines. In Meridian, Mississippi, the Lauderdale County Board of Education was approached by the executive director of the state ACLU about discontinuing a policy of offering invocations before high school football games, but the ACLU director failed to show up at a crucial board meeting so the invocations continue.

Other regions respond

In Texas, another state not directly within the Eleventh Circuit jurisdiction, the reaction of rural high school authorities to the Jager case was immediate and forcefully in favor of prayer. A few examples taken from the Brownwood, Texas, area⁴⁰ (about 133 miles northwest of Austin, toward Abilene) will suffice.⁴¹

• "We're gonna pray. It's not a matter of defiance. Instead, we'll be operating under the assumption that it's a community decision

to continue with the prayers. There's not anybody in Coleman who is personally offended by prayers and if they are and come forward, well, then we'll abide by the ruling. I guess until somebody tells me something different, we'll pray." — Superintendent, Coleman Independent School District (ISD)

• "We're planning to go ahead with the normal pregame ceremony which includes an invocation. It's a crying shame we can't even have something as simple as a pre-game prayer without the government getting involved." — Superintendent, Early ISD

• "We're gonna ignore the ruling until they come out and slap the handcuffs on us. I feel like they're way out of line on this one." — Superintendent Santa Anna ISD

• "I don't know what everyone else will be doing, but we'll be having an invocation. It's my own feeling, of course, but for those that think it's bad or wrong to pray before a football game, that's just tough. . . . Anybody that doesn't want to hear it in Richland Springs can just not come to our games." — Superintendent Richland Springs ISD

• "We're gonna pray before the game, during the first quarter, at the half, and if we're behind, maybe even in the third and fourth quarters. We might even have a prayer meeting on the field when the game's over if we feel like it. Our pregame program will stay the same.

"We're not gonna change what we've been doing for 50 years." — Superintendent Cross Plains ISD

The case in a nutshell

What we have here, in summary, is a typical scenario with regard to litigating separation of state and church issues. We start out with plaintiffs who are basically too scared to admit that they are

actually Atheists. They do not want to be murdered in their sleep by the hate-filled Christians who surround them in a small Southern community. They don't know where else to go for help so they run to the ACLU. No local attorney would dare touch a case challenging prayer if he or she ever hoped to have a client from that county again. The ACLU steps in and immediately tries everything to compromise without going to legal action. The Christian school officials will not bend an inch so the whole thing goes to court. As can be expected, 99 percent of the time, the case is actually lost on the lower court level. District federal court judges may be appointed for life, but they live in the geographical area they serve and they are subject to social and political pressures. The only atypical thing was that the Jagers were not thrown out by the district court on "standing," with a need to fight that issue up the appellate ladder before ever getting to the merits. The religionists always argue that the constitutional violation in question falls under the "Free Exercise" Clause instead of the "Establishment" Clause, or that their religious ritual is somehow different and more "secular" than other religious rituals that have come before. Most of the time the local district judge buys one of the two arguments. The appellate level is the only hope for state/church cases these days.

Once the actual decision comes down it is appealed, either way. The appeals process must go "all the way," and even then the religionists will not give up. Even a Supreme Court decision cannot deter Christians. They have no respect, let's face facts, for any "law" other than the "law" of their alleged god. That God-Law, to create a term, is malleable. It can be molded and formed to fit almost any individual interpretation. A Christian only knows that he or she serves "god" or "Jesus" and to hell, literally, with anything else that gets in the way. They are, after all, above the law because they are the majority — and they know it.

³⁹Clarion-Ledger, Jackson, Mississippi, September 9, 1989, sec. B.

⁴⁰All small towns in a three-county area surrounding Brownwood.

⁴¹Brownwood Bulletin, 8 September 1989, p. 1.

The religious can get away with murder, and not just in the figurative sense. They know this too and use every inch of their "majority rule" power.

After the pregame prayers were declared unconstitutional, the reaction of the school districts affected was more than predictable. In the wake of the decision the rationalization of "Well, our prayer is just a little different than the specific fact situation in the Jager case so we can just continue to do what we have been doing and slip by this Eleventh Circuit thing," echoes throughout the South.

If the fact situation differential doesn't cut it, then "Plan B" is the semantics game. What about a "moment of silence"? A prayer by any other name is still a prayer — that is what is wrong with a "moment of silence."

If the constitutional violation cannot be justified by means of the semantics or fact situation differential ploys, then implementation of the violation is turned over to nongovernmental persons. Local ministers urge on the crowds to sponsor the violative activity. The mayor runs onto the field, radio stations broadcast prayers, the T-shirt hawkers line up with a "chest display" version of the Lord's Prayer, the teams, the bands, the coaches, student athletes, anything! Just keep those prayers coming. No matter how degrading or petty the format, what's important is the prayer.

When all else fails, the sheer overwhelming weight of community social pressures creates an atmosphere in which no one would dare step forward to object to a pregame prayer. So the prayers go on because no one complains, no one challenges.

All of this simply has to stop.

Two things are desperately needed. The first, and I have said this over and over again, is to put some teeth into enforcement of court decisions in separation of state and church cases. With regard to high school football prayers, if a given school district refuses to stop the prayers, the district school board mem-

Dial-An-Atheist

The telephone listings below are the various services where you may listen to short comments on state/church separation issues and viewpoints originated by the Atheist community.

Phoenix, AZ	(602) 273-1336	Northern New Jersey	(201) 777-0766
Tucson, AZ	(602) 623-3861	Keene, NH	(603) 352-0116
San Diego, CA	(619) 660-6663	New York City, NY	(212) 861-6520
San Francisco, CA	(415) 647-8481	Dial-a-Gay-Atheist	(718) 899-1737
Sonoma County, CA	(707) 792-2207	Mansfield, OH	(419) 522-2686
San Jose, CA	(408) 377-8485	Columbus, OH	(614) 294-0300
God Speaks	(408) 257-1486	Findley (Toledo), OH	(419) 423-4090
Greater DC	(703) 280-4321	Portland, OR	(503) 771-6208
Denver, CO	(303) 252-0711	Philadelphia, PA	(215) 533-1620
Southern Florida	(305) 474-6728	DIAL-THE-ATHEIST	
Tampa, FL	(813) 677-7731	Austin, TX	(512) 458-5731
Atlanta, GA	(404) 662-6606	Dallas, TX	(214) 824-5800
Northern Illinois	(708) 506-9200	Houston, TX	(713) 776-3309
Dial-a-Gay-Atheist	(708) 255-2960	Dial-a-Gay-Atheist	(713) 880-4242
Detroit, MI	(313) 272-1981	Salt Lake City, UT	(801) 364-4939
Minneapolis, MN	(612) 631-1882	Seattle, WA	(206) 859-4668

bers, one at a time, should be thrown into jail and kept there until the necessary compliance is achieved. If that does not work, the school district should be fined, so much for each infraction, until it gives in. The second change needed is the community involvement of those in dissent to religion. Every time a school district violates the Constitution with a prayer at a school-sponsored activity, someone needs to complain. As long as the religionists can intimidate entire communities, there will be no complaints and thus no change.

I have a case in point. Downers Grove North High School in Downers Grove, Illinois, has followed a nineteen-year tradition of having the football coach lead his team in the Lord's Prayer under the goalposts after games. Robert Sherman, Northern Illinois Chapter Director for American Atheists, found out about the practice and called the superintendent of Downers Grove High School

District 99 and told him that the Chapter would picket an upcoming playoff game and possibly take legal action if the practice was not halted. The school district backed down, and the coach stopped the prayers because there had been a protest.⁴²

All it took was a dedicated Atheist with enough guts to stand up for the Constitution and the situation was rectified.

Atheists must get involved in challenging religious intrusion into what should be secular areas, like the public schools, and we must seek penalties for those who are unwilling to obey the law under the pretext of its violating some higher allegiance to their god. *

⁴²Suburban Life Graphic, 4 November 1989, Downers Grove, Lisle, Westmont, Woodridge, Illinois, front page; ibid., 8 November 1989, p. 8.

Here's to blasphemy

Religion is downright unhealthy, and a spot of blasphemy is a good tonic for it.

Blasphemy is in the news these days, and if you move in the wrong circles, the penalty is death. I had better watch my step, because I have decided that I am in favour of blasphemy, which means to talk profanely or to utter impiety against god, or anything sacred.

Well, I disapprove of god, and I think all religions are bad for your health, both moral and physical. I object to the whole concept of sacredness. So come and get me, ayatollahs: I'm setting up as a professional blasphemer. Impiety, anyone?

A lady broadcaster, whose name I unfortunately did not catch, was discussing the Salman Rushdie issue on a CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) religious program a little while ago. She spoke favourably of religious toleration as well as freedom of speech, but stipulated that no one has the right to speak critically of another's religion.

That puts a severe limit on freedom of speech. What if the religion is cruel and oppressive, advocating that people be stoned to death or have their hands cut off, for fairly minor crimes? What if a religious group decides that human sacrifice is essential to its practice — are we allowed to raise our voices?

Why protect religion?

Why should religion be immune from criticism, or exempt from satire? Why is it characterized as "sacred," "holy," etc.? What is religion anyway?

Definitions are usually couched in respectful, even laudatory terms, suggesting that religion is productive of, or essential to, rectitude and probity. Or, as a small-sized relative of mine preachily advised, "You should go to church, Aunt Vickie, because it will make you good."

You watch yourself, young sanctimonious one, or you'll get cut out of your rich aunt's will.

After considerable thought, I have decided that religion can be defined by two essential elements. One, distinguished by Dr. Margaret Knight in

Morals Without Religion, is belief in a supernatural power. The second is dependence on faith, which is belief unsupported by reason or evidence other than "authority." That is, when you prove your point by quoting Augustine or the Bible — "People who work on Sunday should be stoned to death, Numbers 15:36!"

Both faith and the supernatural are inadmissible in science, which is based on doubt, rejects authority, and demands evidence. Scientific conclusions are permanently tentative and subject to correction if new evidence arises. Religion claims to have absolute knowledge, perennial and immutable, on the authority of the Bible.

Two major questions now arise: why do we associate sacredness and holiness with the supernatural, and can we assume that religion inculcates virtue and morality? Let us take the last one first, following the scriptural recipe.

Christians take it as axiomatic that religion and morality are inseparable. "Few would deny that . . . morality and religion are intertwined and that to associate God and morality is an effective way of teaching morality," said Canadian Justice Dennis O'Leary, arguing that schools have an obligation to teach morality, and that one way of doing it is to make kids recite the Lord's Prayer every day.

When the Canadian courts at last ruled that this practice was discriminatory, one school principal quit his job rather than give up the exclusive use of the Lord's Prayer. "The Christian values and morals inculcated by the prayer are too important to be discarded."

And yet there is very little evidence that religion "makes you good," and abundant evidence that religious people can be very nasty indeed.

In the past twenty-odd years, there has been an enormous upsurge in religiosity, with television evangelists exhorting us to send them money so that they can carry Jesus' message to the world. This seems odd, since Jesus'

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Victoria Branden

Religion has thus conspicuously failed as a moral force, and failed among those who, as preachers and teachers, should be most apt through training and conviction, to set a good example.

message is easily available. Anyone who wants it can find it simply by reading the Bible and there is no shortage of Bibles, although few people really read them. (Or they would stop being Christians.) The evangelists have made huge fortunes, too often by preying on those least able to afford it — the elderly and the ill-educated.

They have set themselves up as religious authorities, preaching at us, telling us how to conduct our lives; yet one after another, they have revealed themselves as most undesirable mentors. If religion "makes you good," why are not they setting better examples?

Jim Bakker was not only involved in sex scandals, but in fraud and embezzlement. Jimmy Swaggart, who loudly condemned Roman Catholicism, communism, and secular humanism (which he blames for pornography, AIDS, and other social ills), was caught visiting with a prostitute.

Jerry Falwell supports apartheid and looks forward eagerly to an impending Armageddon when a just, loving, and merciful god will sentence all but the fundamentalists to torture in a lake of eternal fire. (An eternity of torment is not Jerry's invention, of course; it is fervidly promised in the prophetic books of the Bible.)

Pat Robertson, also an enthusiastic Armageddonist, claims that he can cure cancer and deflect hurricanes; that is, he's a liar. Both he and Billy Graham have announced that Jews and Muslims will go to hell unless they accept Jesus. Peter Popoff, whose television program featured sensational faith healings, was publicly exposed as a fraud by the magician James Randi. Oral Roberts practised a form of religious blackmail, claiming that god was going to abduct him in some spectacular way unless the public came through with several million dollars. Unfortunately, some demented plutocrat produced the cash: it would have been amusing to call Oral's (god's?) bluff. He has also claimed that he can raise the dead, although he has latterly

toned down his boasts since the United Methodists condemned his fundraising as "offensive, inappropriate, and objectionable."

As well as being hypocritical and morally bankrupt, your average Christian is a model of intolerance. In Manitoba, Canada, seventeen-year-old Atheist Chris Tait was expelled from school as a troublemaker because he objected to standing for the Lord's Prayer. His family received more than sixty abusive phone calls, including death threats; their property was vandalized; crosses were painted on the road in front of their house. Eventually the school apologized and admitted that Chris, an honour student, was not a troublemaker. But for people who claim that religion equals morality, it was hardly edifying. What kind of morality permits intolerance, threats, destructiveness, and dishonesty?

Religion has thus conspicuously failed as a moral force, and failed among those who, as preachers and teachers, should be most apt through training and conviction, to set a good example. However, the television-spawned evangelists are not the only ones to demonstrate the failure of religion to make you good.

Mainline depravity

A series of ugly scandals about priests has rocked the Roman Catholic church in Canada. In September 1988 Father James Hickey was given a five-year jail term for twenty counts of sexual assault and gross indecency since 1970. At last reading there were, in Newfoundland courts, fourteen cases of sexual abuse of young boys by priests and Christian brothers. There are others in Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia.

These are only the tip of the iceberg. A CBC "Man Alive" program revealed that for years Indian children were molested by missionary priests and nuns. Children were too frightened to report abuse by priests who, particularly in small communities, were figures of enormous power. Even if a child told his

parents, they were often too intimidated by the priest to do anything about it — or they would decide that the child was lying, since such a crime by their spiritual father was unthinkable.

The automatic response of the church has always been to deny, to attempt to cover up scandals. James Hayes, president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, believes that procedures for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse by priests are "adequate." Adequate from whose point of view? Not from that of the abused children, one may fairly assume. It is doubtful that the church has learned much from the scandals, although new ones seem to crop up almost daily.

Rome is too much preoccupied with other matters to have time for abused kids. A news story from Vatican City reported Cardinal Edouard Gagnon's indictment of American society, condemning "divorce, birth control, and the entertainment industry." The Vatican is also disturbed about homosexuality, sterilization, and feminism, because of "their deleterious influence on the family." No mention of pederasty or molestation of children by priests and brothers.

The Vatican seems totally unaware of the population explosion, which the Brundtland Report distinguished as the most dangerous factor in the global environment crisis. "Theologians are increasingly recognizing the social and moral disaster a contraceptive mentality can lead to," thundered Cardinal Gagnon. But an anti-contraceptive mentality has caused, and continues to cause, environmental havoc. It is high time the church became aware that the planet is finite and cannot support non-stop population growth. China just announced, without celebration, the arrival of its 1.1 billionth citizen. A contraceptive mentality is going to be forced on us, whether the Vatican approves or not.

Corruption among the professedly religious is nothing new. Gibbon tells of

Lady of Czestochowa, at Jasna Gora Monastery on August 25, 26, or 29 (who knows, with how the dates varied in news reports). His remarks as reported by the American media included an admonition to the Jews not to "talk with us from a position of a nation raised above all others." Reuters, the English news service, reported the same statement as "Do not talk to us from the position of a people raised above all others and do not dictate conditions that cannot be fulfilled." He noted that Jewish power lay in the mass media, "at your disposal in many countries. Let them not serve to spread anti-Polish feelings. . . . If there is no anti-Polish feeling, there will be no anti-Semitism here."

Associated Press also reported about Glemp:

But he intensified charges of anti-Semitism by using language that invoked the image of Jews spreading communism and by saying that Jews collaborated with Nazis during World War II, that Jews as businessmen neglected or detested Poles and that Jews had easy access to mass media.

The statements were all the conclusions drawn by the reporter, John Daniszewski. Glemp's full statements were not reported by the media. But, according to Daniszewski, a Polish Roman Catholic journalist, Krzysztof Sliwinski responded in the Polish opposition's newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* and this time there was an actual quotation:

The expressions used by the primate, even contrary to his intentions, pose a danger of deeply wounding the feelings of many of those who are descendants and brothers of the Holocaust victims.

This time Cardinal Albert Decourtray leapt to Glemp's defense and said that it was unlikely that Glemp's words were meant the way they were received.



Michael Lerner, editor of *Tikkun*, the largest circulation Jewish magazine in the United States, disagreed. He called on President Bush and the Congress of the United States to withhold all United States economic and political support from Poland, "until they deal more effectively with anti-Semitism." World Jewish Congress official Kalman Sultanik charged:

Cardinal Glemp's statement was hate-filled and reveals that an ugly vein of anti-Semitism runs through the Polish church.

Again and again, it was apparent on the surface that Glemp, as well as most of the Roman Catholics in this highly Roman Catholic country, could not understand why any religious persons would feel that prayers for the dead were harmful or that a small group of Roman Catholic nuns have no right to honor their dead at the site where they died.

Somewhere along the way, perhaps in the initial homily, Glemp added that Weiss and his students had only been prevented from killing the nuns and destroying the building. He asked the official Polish news agency, PAP, to stop referring to Weiss and his students as "heroes."

Weiss, back in New York, immediately threatened to sue Glemp for defamation both in the United States and in Poland. He also began seeking counsel from experts in the Roman Catholic church for possible disciplinary action against Glemp. Additionally he sent a letter to Glemp demanding a retraction "in a national speech."

In that media outreach about which Glemp complained, one Samuel Pisar, a

U.S. citizen and international lawyer who lives in Paris, was much in the news. He claimed to be one of the youngest Jews who survived the Auschwitz camp. He charged that the argument over the nuns was giving Hitler "posthumous satisfaction" and directed his fighting words directly to the pope, asking for the pope's intervention in the matter. On September 5, Elie Wiesel, another Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, also asked the pontiff to take a position on the issue.

The Pope's silence will be judged by history. How could the Pope . . . fail to take a position on an affair concerning his own country?

But Wiesel went further than that as he charged that the Poles were trying to "de-Judaize the Holocaust." Roman Catholic replies from Poland continued to emphasize that the nuns at Auschwitz was a "local issue." To this Wiesel replied:

If Auschwitz means anything at all, it is . . . the planned extermination of 6 million Jews . . . it is not a local issue.

The Jews received international coverage on their charge that the convent was an example of a Roman Catholic "hijack" of a Jewish symbol — the 6,000,000 Jews killed in Hitler's holocaust. The Roman Catholics replied that there were 500,000 killed who were non-Jews and that these included priests and nuns. Kalman Sultanik, a vice president of the World Jewish Congress, called Poland's chargé d'affaires in Washington, D.C., on August 29 and demanded that he forward a request to Polish President Wojciech Jaruzelski and Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki that they disavow the remarks "as anti-Semitic." Sultanik charged that Glemp's comments were "grotesque and hate-filled."

"Letters to the Editor" broke out in

most of the newspapers and magazines in the United States, and most of them were written by heads of Jewish organizations in the nation. Several had other interesting themes such as the following which appeared in the *Chicago Sun-Times* (31 August 1989):

... Paradoxically, according to the Jewish authors such as David Krenzler (*Thy Brother's Blood: The Orthodox Jewish Response During the Holocaust*), organized Jewry in the United States was more interested in the realization of a homeland (state of Israel) than in saving Jewish masses in Nazi-occupied Europe. In addition, it was felt that the European Orthodox Jews were considered undesirable on the grounds that their distinctive customs and dress might result in anti-Semitism.

The following quotation is found in Ben Hecht's book *Perfidy*: "In a Polish town, all the Jews assembled in the synagogue before their extermination and cursed the Jews of the free world, who did nothing, while they were being taken to their deaths. (Magen Bessetter, official documentary publication of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1948.)"

Eugene L. Slotkowski, M.D.

That fiftieth anniversary

Indeed, by the end of August, the bitter dispute had escalated until it was thought it would interfere with ceremonies in Poland to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of World War II. The first shots of World War II were fired in Gdansk (Danzig) on the morning of September 1, 1939, when German troops invaded Poland. Finally, the only rabbi in Poland, Menachem Joskowicz, decided to boycott a gathering of religious leaders in Poland who prayed for peace on that fiftieth anniversary. Actually, not one Jew appeared at the ceremony in Warsaw's Royal Castle Square.



Much more ado

On the same day, Senator Paul Simon, (D-Illinois) personally delivered a message to Cardinal Glemp warning that unless the convent was closed and the nuns removed, all United States foreign aid would be cut off.

The World Jewish Congress, in the midst of it all, through its president, Edgar Bronfman, called for a boycott of formal relations with the Holy See by its members.

The Jews, by this time, bringing in every conceivable charge against the nuns, were claiming that it was possible to take the guided tour of Auschwitz, and other Polish camps such as Sobibor, and never be told that the majority of the people "murdered" were Jews. The presence of the Carmelite nuns, the Jews claimed, thus took away from the significance of Hitler's "final solution" for the Jews.

On September 2, Glemp was interviewed in Warsaw by several Italian reporters. He was widely quoted in newspapers published in Italy the next day:

It is a scandal to expel the nuns from the convent. What do we have to do? Put them in tents? Who do the nuns offend by praying next to the wall of the concentration camp? The land they are on is land where [Roman] Catholics, let's say Christians, were martyred. I don't understand why they should be transferred. . . . Our people don't understand.

Another extensive interview came

quickly on September 3, this time in Gniezno, the historical cradle of Polish Catholicism, in a chancery room where portraits of his predecessors over several centuries covered the walls. He was somewhat conciliatory, pointing out that there was much more to the matter than simply "evicting" the nuns:

A lot of matters remain to be peacefully clarified. This cannot be settled by an eviction order to the Carmelites. We have to quietly consider the feelings and impressions of the Jewish nation and the Polish nation.

Trying to understand the Jewish situation, I think that they feel hurt that this great place of memories is being slighted by Poles and the fact that we do not want to accept the different nature of their sacrifice, their full sacrifice in comparison with Polish sacrifices.

On the other hand, Poles' feelings have to be understood, too, since they consider the soil around the camp as their own soil. And now they consider the eviction order against the Carmelites as an offense against Polish sovereignty.

Renegotiation

Not through as yet, Glemp also opined that the four cardinals who had signed the Geneva accord were "not competent" to represent the Roman Catholic side of the conflict:

I want this accord to be renegotiated. It has to be done by competent people, and not by just any cardinal who doesn't understand the things.

Three of the four cardinals immediately got into a huff and on September 3 declared that the primate of Poland "could only have been speaking for himself" — not for the church — when he uttered these words. The agreement, they claimed, had been "patiently and

Islam and Christianity not only promoted the idea of slavery but added the idea of racism to it.

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Derek Robert

Divine racism

When one considers previous and contemporary social problems, religion is often found as the root cause. War, overpopulation, spread of disease, and general ignorance have, throughout history, received hearty encouragement from religion. This is also true for the worst and most prevalent social problem in American history: slavery and its accompanying anti-Black racism. Religion played a large part in encouraging American racism, but its role did not begin here in the New World. The history of anti-Black thought and religion stretches back to the early centuries A.D. and has been encouraged by "pagan" mysticism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Slavery in antiquity was prevalent, but was not based on skin color or other physical characteristics. To the Greeks, slavery was reserved for "barbarians," who were at least as likely to be light-skinned as dark-skinned. The Greeks did not link color and other physical traits with natural inferiority, but instead attributed them to temperature and environment.¹

The Arabs also lacked racist bases for slavery. Their ideas about human color did not provide generic classifications for different groups. The Arabs described people in terms of brightness and shade, rather than hue. They used terms such as swarthy, ruddy, and sallow to describe people. The specific color terms they used were applied personally or relatively. The Arabs considered themselves black in contrast to the Persians, but red in relation to the Africans.² The lack of racist attitudes prior to the Middle Ages certainly does not justify the slavery which occurred during that time. It does show, however, that racism was not prevalent prior to its association with

religion.

Black as sin

Early racist ideas against black people began with the association of darkness with sin. In the early third century A.D., Origen, the head of the catechetical school in Alexandria, introduced into patristic literature the idea of the darkness of black Africans contrasting with spiritual light. A hundred years later, Didymus the Blind, who also headed the catechetical, wrote similarly. He described Ethiopians as

those who fall beneath the stroke of God's sword . . . because they all share in the malice and sin of the Devil, from whose blackness they get their name.

In early Christian thought, Ethiopians and black Africans in general were considered to be ugly and smelly hedonistic demons.³

Later, the association of darkness and sin appears in the Koran. Chapter 3, verse 102 of the Koran reads:

As for those whose faces have become black — will you disbelieve after having believed? Then taste the punishment for the unbelief which you have been showing. But as for those whose faces have become white — in the mercy of Allah will they be, therein to abide.

Though this verse is not a specific reference to races, it shows the development in the Arab world of the association of blackness with sin and lightness with purity.⁴

The origin of this perception of color and sin is thought to have many possible sources. It is derived in part from astrology, alchemy, and gnosticism or various forms of Manichaeism (which is

¹David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 33.

²Bernard Lewis, *Race and Color in Islam* (New York: Octagon Books, 1979), pp. 7-8.

³Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, p. 37.

⁴Lewis, *Race and Color*, p. 101.

based on the doctrine of good, as represented by light and the soul, and evil, as represented by darkness and the body).⁵ These early ideas were the crucial catalysts needed to begin the wave of anti-Black racism which would result in the large-scale exploitation of Black slave labor.

Muslim racism

After the death of Mohammed in A.D. 632, the Arab perception of color began to change. Arabs started applying specific color terms, such as white and black, to specific groups. With this new view of color came the association of dark skin and inferiority.⁶ The view of Blacks as inferior is reflected in Black poetry as early as A.D. 660. The African slave poet Suhaym wrote in 660:

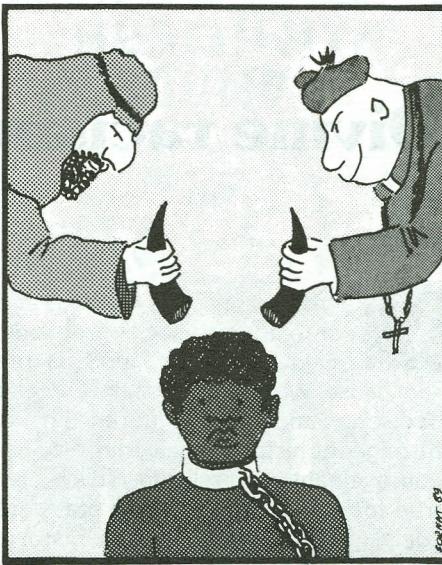
If my color were pink, women
would love me
But the Lord has marred me with
blackness.⁷

Abu Dulama, a later Black poet, amused his master by mocking his own appearance and that of his family:

We are alike in color; our faces are
black and
ugly, our names shameful.⁸

The tragedy in this poetry is not only in the fact that it was written by oppressed people, but also in its self-deprecating nature.

The growing anti-Black feeling in the Muslim world corresponded with the Muslim invasion of Nubia. Nubia was an African country located just south of Egypt which was raided in the mid-seventh century. In order to appease the Muslims and prevent further raids, the Nubians offered an annual tribute of 365



slaves to the Arab invaders.⁹ This added to the view of Blacks as inferior by creating a feeling of disdain on the part of the Muslim conquerors for the weak, conquered Nubians.

Around this same time, Muslim *hadiths* began to develop which added Mohammanian authority to anti-Black feeling. *Hadiths* are traditions concerning the words and actions of Mohammed not specifically mentioned in the Koran. One *hadith* quotes Mohammed as saying of the Ethiopian: "When he is hungry, he steals; when he is sated, he fornicates."¹⁰ Another has an Ethiopian saying to Mohammed that "You Arabs excel us in all, in build, color, and possession of the Prophet."¹¹ Muslims also had racist *hadiths* concerning marriage.

Be careful in choosing mates for your offspring, and beware of marrying the Zanji [Blacks of east Africa] for he is a distorted creature.¹²

Another says "Do not bring black into your pedigree."¹³ These *hadiths* are very important because they add more specifically religious justification for racism and thus make oppression of Blacks a divinely sanctioned practice.

⁵Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, p. 37.

⁶Lewis, *Race and Color*, p. 9.

⁷Ibid., p. 11.

⁸Ibid., p. 13.

⁹William D. Phillips, *Slavery from the Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. 81.

¹⁰Lewis, *Race and Color*, p. 19.

¹¹Ibid., p. 21.

¹²Ibid., p. 91.

¹³Ibid., p. 92.

The sons of Ham

In the eighth century, an argument was introduced which would affect both Muslim and Christian societies for many centuries. The argument deals with the Noachian curse on the sons of Ham in the Old Testament of the Bible and is found in Genesis 9:20-27. The story is about what happened to Noah, whom the Bible calls the first farmer, when he grew a vineyard. After learning to make wine and consuming some one day, Noah became extremely intoxicated and passed out in his tent without his clothes on. Noah's son, Ham (who was the father of Canaan), happened to enter Noah's tent and saw his father who was still unconscious and naked. Ham went out and told his brothers Shem and Japheth what he saw, and they went in and covered their father up. Upon waking, Noah learned what Ham "had done to him" and cursed Ham's descendants to be slaves.

This story sounds difficult to understand to modern readers because it is unclear exactly what Ham did which was so horrible. It is important to consider this story in the context of ancient Hebrew society. To the Hebrews, genitals were extremely private and were not something which should be seen by others. When Ham sees Noah nude, he is committing an act just as immoral as the violation of any other Hebrew law.¹⁴ Ham disgraces himself by an accidental, but nevertheless unforgivable, action.

The origin of this story can be found in the Hebrew attitudes towards wine and drunkenness. Hebrews believed that drunkenness was evil and caused evil. It is believed, however, that their Canaanite neighbors had a completely opposite view of alcohol. The Canaanites saw wine as a divine gift from God.¹⁵ To the Hebrews, Canaan was a civiliza-

¹⁴John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 183.

¹⁵Ibid.

Saint Augustine saw slavery as punishment for man's fall from grace.

He supported this by pointing out that
Jehovah bears responsibility for determining
who should be master and who should be slave.

tion which was doomed by its vices to enslavement by the more "virtuous" races.¹⁶ The Noah story is a reaction to what occurs in a society where the enjoyment of wine is common. By means of the story, the hedonistic Canaanites are harshly criticized by linking them to a disgraced ancestor.

It was this story which, in the eighth century, was used to justify oppression of Blacks. Arab writers increasingly began to combine this story with earlier associations of blackness with sin. Arabs suggested that Blacks are the descendants of Ham who were blackened as a result of their ancestor's disgrace.¹⁷ Black people should therefore be enslaved, in accordance with Allah's wishes. This idea spread throughout Europe and was still alive in the nineteenth century during the Civil War in America.

By the tenth century, Black slavery was markedly increasing in the Muslim world. Muslims had a monopoly of the slave trade which ran through the Sahara to inner Africa. Slave trade along the trans-Saharan route jumped from an annual rate of 3000 per year in the ninth century to 8700 per year in the tenth and eleventh centuries. During the latter time period, almost two million Blacks were taken across Africa and enslaved in Muslim countries.¹⁸

This expansion of Blacks into the Muslim world lowered the view of Blacks even further in the eyes of Muslims and Christians. Originally for the Muslims, Blacks were heathen and consequently deserved slavery. Many Blacks, however, were eventually converted to Islam. Nevertheless, it was too late for them. The master-slave relationship which had already existed for many years served to reinforce mental attitudes in Muslims about the inferiority of Blacks.

The large population of Blacks in

Muslim countries also affected ideas in Europe. Because of the barrier created by the Muslim nations, Europeans had little or no knowledge of sub-Saharan Blacks. The European Christian, therefore, based his view of black Africans on the slaves in Muslim countries. Because most of the African slaves had been converted to Islam, Europeans began to associate Blacks with Christianity's mortal enemy, Islam.¹⁹ This added yet another reason to dislike Black people and was based, like all racist ideas, on ignorance.

Europe and slavery

European theological ideas about slavery during the Middle Ages did nothing to discourage it. Around the beginning of the fifth century, Saint Augustine established certain principles which would carry European thought on slavery throughout the Middle Ages. Augustine saw slavery as punishment for man's fall from grace. He supported this by pointing out that Jehovah bears responsibility for determining who should be master and who should be slave. The only true slave, according to Augustine, is the slave to sin.²⁰

The New Testament of the Bible includes several admonitions to slaves about becoming slaves to sin. In Colossians 3:24, slaves are encouraged to work hard "knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ." In 1 Timothy 6:1-3, slaves are encouraged to serve their masters well, particularly if they are Christian masters. Even when slavery was on the decline in Europe in the tenth and eleventh centuries, acceptance of slavery persisted because the populace had been indoctrinated into the Christian view that slavery should go unopposed.²¹

Along with the racism that developed in the Middle Ages came stereotypes about the dark-skinned Africans. They were described as having kinky hair, sharp teeth, an offensive odor, and (in the males) oversized penises.²² Blacks were considered to be mentally inferior, hyper-sexual, and happy workers. An Arabic writer of the Middle Ages wrote that Black children are burned by heat in the womb and come out

something between black and murky, malodorous, stinking, wooly-haired with deficient minds and depraved passions.²³

Religionists would be quick to point out that Christianity played a large role in ending slavery in America and fighting the racism which accompanied it. The religious fervor which accompanied the second "Great Awakening" in America did act as a catalyst which helped propel abolitionist sentiment. It would be incredibly naïve, however, to overlook the concurrent racism which occurred in the southern portion of America which drew its justifications also from Christianity. As recently as the past twenty years, religion has still been on the side of racism. After desegregation was ordered by the Supreme Court, religious schools still provided safe, segregated havens for Christian bigots. Christianity has played at least as large a role in promoting racism in America as it has in fighting racism.

Even if one were to ignore religion's role in promoting racism and slavery in America, it would be ridiculous to suggest that a few decades of liberal religious thought would cancel out the centuries of religiously-justified anti-Black racism. The period from the early centuries A.D. through the Middle Ages saw racist ideas walking hand-in-hand (See "Divine Racism" on page 48)

¹⁶Ibid., p. 185.

¹⁷Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, p. 42.

¹⁸Phillips, *Slavery*, p. 87.

¹⁹Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, p. 39.

²⁰David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 88.

²¹Ibid., p. 91.

²²Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, p. 42.

²³Ibid., p. 43.

The Shoah: hope springs eternal

**How odd of god
to choose the Jews.
How mad, how sad,
to hope the pope
would nod with god.**

Born on April 13, 1919, Dr. O'Hair initiated the United States Supreme Court case *Murray v. Curlett*, which removed reverential Bible reading and prayer recitation from the public schools of our nation in June 1963. She founded American Atheists in the same year. Together with GORA she founded the United World Atheists, sponsor of the triennial World Atheist Meet. A champion of freedom of speech, freedom of assemblage, freedom of conscience, and the right to be free from religion, she is known nationally and internationally as an Atheist spokesperson.

Madalyn O'Hair



On December 8, 1988, two participants in a landmark study of anti-Semitism announced that Pope John Paul II had agreed on that date to begin a study of both anti-Semitism and the Roman Catholic church's involvement in the so-called holocaust. (The reverent Jew uses the word *Shoah*, Hebrew for "annihilation." The word *holocaust* means something else: a free offering given to provide glory to god.) It was then agreed that a joint Roman Catholic-Jewish commission on anti-Semitism would investigate the Vatican archives from (September 1) 1939 to (in Europe, May 7) 1945, the period of World War II.

The study was projected to begin in February 1989 and would result in a "blueprint" for Roman Catholic-Jewish relations in the next millennium. The only American Roman Catholic on the Vatican committee was Eugene Fisher, head of Roman Catholic-Jewish relations for the National Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States. He also serves on the Vatican Commission on Roman Catholic Relations with the Jews.

Enter the Carmelites

But the Jews had what was considered at that time a minor beef with the Roman Catholic church. In 1984, a number* of Carmelite nuns had moved into a warehouse outside the walls of the Auschwitz concentration camp and set up a routine of perpetual prayers for the souls of the Roman Catholics who had met death in that camp. Carmelite nuns live in contemplative communities in an enclosed life of poverty, sacrifice, and prayer of atonement for human sin. They are not permitted to have visitors. The former warehouse the nuns occupy is on the perimeter of the camp. The building is now known as "the old

theatre." Little or no attention was paid to the little prayerful group until 1986. At that time a fund-raising pamphlet was published by an ultraconservative group of Belgian Roman Catholics called "Aid to the Church in Distress." It asked for funding for the Carmelite group. Further than that, media reports are hopelessly confused as to the content of the pamphlet. Either it described the convent as "a center of conversion for our lost brothers" — thus distorting its original objective — or it called for continuing prayer for the Jews.

Certain militant Jewish groups immediately began to protest, the substance of their complaint being that Roman Catholic nuns' praying near Auschwitz was an insult to the Jews of the world. Auschwitz, they appeared to think, should be kept as a memorial for the Jews alone and no other ethnic groups or religions should be associated with it for any reason. The only solution, therefore, was to remove the nuns from the building outside the walls of the camp. They called for meetings between Jews and Roman Catholics to negotiate toward that end, meetings that continued through 1986 and 1987. Among those involved were Belgian and French cardinals and Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, the archbishop of Krakow, Poland. Generally speaking, the Roman Catholic response was that it was inconceivable that anyone could be offended by the presence of a few Carmelite nuns, especially since they were outside the Auschwitz camp, and especially since they were praying for the souls of Roman Catholics who had died in the camp. The Jews decided unilaterally, even before the meetings, that the inoffensive nuns must be removed since their prayers and even their presence was "offensive to the memory of the Jewish victims."

Apparently the Jews felt that the nuns were praying to a different god than theirs. They, therefore, declared that before the Jewish-Roman Catholic dialogue on the activity of the Roman

Catholic church during World War II could be mounted, the nuns had to go.

The Vatican concordat

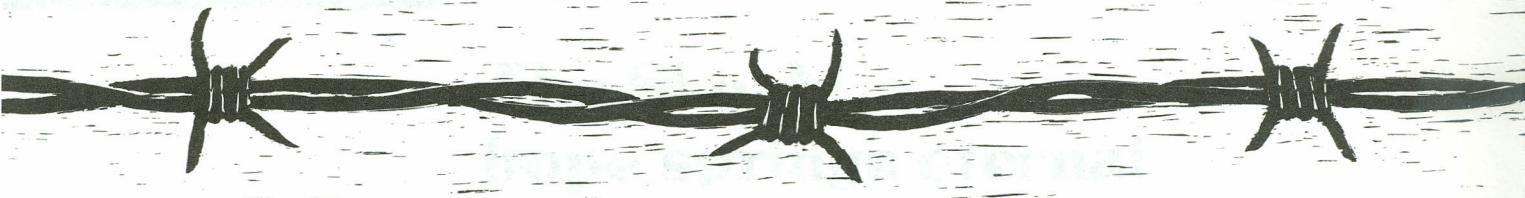
Not surprisingly, the Roman Catholic church — the sly old dog — was not annoyed at all with the delay of that dialogue, since that church was as guilty as sin of collaboration with Hitler and Mussolini during World War II. On July 20, 1933, the Vatican had signed a concordat with Hitler legitimizing his government before the world. The concordat was signed on behalf of the Vatican by its then Papal Secretary of State Monsignor Eugenio Pacelli, who later became Pope Pius XII. In return, the German government agreed that tithing (10 percent of income) for the church would be deducted from the paychecks of every German and delivered by the German government to the church. That part of the concordat is still in effect today.

In essence, the emotional Jews played into the hands of the Roman Catholic church, which has delayed for over fifty years any investigation into its partisan activities with the Fascist states of Germany and Italy.

In 1933, at the time of the signing of the concordat, there were fifty detention camps in Germany. They were later reorganized, with the smaller ones closed and larger ones constructed. However, during the decade of the 1930s no more than about 20,000 persons were in such camps. Members of the political opposition to Hitler were the first interred in the camps. Anarchists and communists followed. In order to keep the purity of the race, Gypsies were gathered up and put in the camps also.

The Nuremberg Laws of September 15, 1935, officially stripped Jews of citizenship and invited them to get the hell out of the country so that Germany would be *Judenfrei* (free of Jews). A free exodus of Jews continued for the next five years, both from Germany and from Austria when it was annexed. For example, the billionaire Baron Louis Roth-

*Media reports continually changed this figure, varying from a low of eight to a high of seventeen.



schild turned over his steel mills to the Hermann Goering Works and left Vienna ca. 1939.

Enter Auschwitz

Auschwitz, Poland, in 1940 was a town of about 12,000 inhabitants in which several factories and a former Austrian cavalry barracks were located. I. G. Farben, the great German chemical trust, immediately found it a suitable site for a new synthetic coal, oil, and rubber plant. All that was needed was cheap labor, which could be supplied by political prisoners transferred there. Krupp, the great munitions manufacturer, also built a large fuse factory there. It should be remembered that Poland was invaded on September 1, 1939, and the opening of both factories and camps within four to six months was a formidable task. The camp was opened in 1940, but given monthly dates conflict. Although it is not generally reported, Auschwitz was simply, first, and foremost, a slave labor camp — and the labor provided was much needed by Farben, Krupp, et al., for the war effort.

At the time that the "nuns at Auschwitz" controversy arose, the Jews were quite anxious to engage the Vatican in some serious dialogue about the curious silence that the Roman Catholic church, and both Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII, had maintained before and during the Second World War when Jews had been under attack in all of the Fascist states of Europe. Their narrow, shrill, and emotional response to the handful of inoffensive nuns precluded that broader effort.

Overtures

In order to indicate that the Vatican might be ready to recognize that Jews are a part of the human community these days, in 1986 the current pope, John Paul II, visited Rome's chief rabbi, Elio Toaff, in his synagogue in that city's ghetto, as a symbolic gesture — that may or may not have had some connection to the beginning storm at Auschwitz.

In any event it was a reaching out to the Jews, since no pope had ever set foot in that synagogue. Also, such an outreach, a visit to an insignificant synagogue in the slums of Rome, now, is much easier than explaining face-to-face why the Roman Catholic church ignores the fact that Jews, by and large, were swept out of Europe in the decade 1935-45 with the apparent consent of the church.

Subsequently, a meeting was arranged in Geneva, Switzerland, to settle the matter of the praying Carmelite nuns of Auschwitz. In attendance were four Roman Catholic cardinals, Godfried Danneels of Brussels, Jean-Marie Lustiger of Paris, Albert Decourtray of Lyon, France, and Franciszek Macharski of Krakow, Poland. The Jews were represented by a delegation from the European Jewish Congress, led by its then president, Theo Klein, a French attorney. All concerned signed an agreement in Geneva on February 22, 1987, with the Roman Catholics pledging to relocate the nuns within two years, that is, by February 1989. They were to be removed to a new center dedicated to Jewish-Roman Catholic dialogue about one-half mile from the camp. The Jews were so insistent upon the removal of the nuns that a part of the agreement was the Jewish decision that they would not meet with the Vatican to continue the mutually agreed upon dialogue in regard to Roman Catholic-Jewish relations and the examination of the role of the Roman Catholic church during the World War II period until the nuns were removed.

The whole matter was called the "Geneva accord."

Silence vs. prayers

At the time of the Geneva meeting, the Jews were most insistent that "silence" should reign at Auschwitz since the "silence" of the world, and by inference that of the Roman Catholic church, permitted the "killing," the Jews claimed, of 2,500,000 Jews in the Auschwitz camp. They explained that they desired the camp to remain as it was when it was

liberated in 1945, as a unique symbol of the Shoah and "as a silent tribute" to the millions of dead.

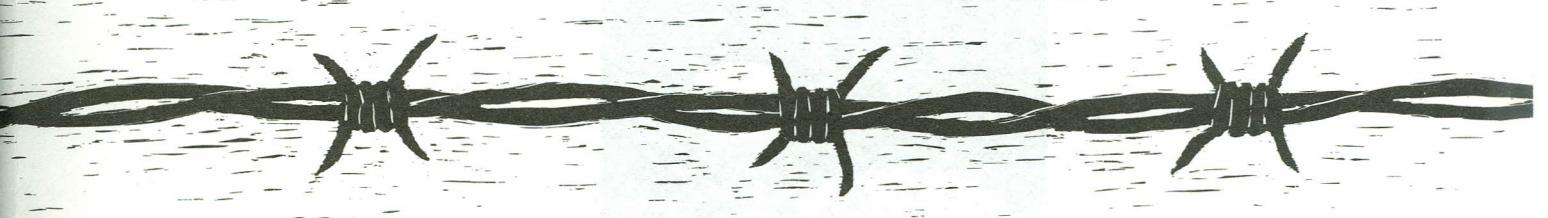
The Jews' notion that Auschwitz should exist in silence may have come from a former grand rabbi of France, Rene-Samuel Sirat, who wrote:

No one in the world has the right to transform into a place of prayer this place where the most appalling idolatry was practiced, by man proclaiming the death of God and striving to make himself divine by reducing other human creatures to the condition of objects, nonpersons. Such prayers risk becoming, according to the biblical expression, "an abomination."

Auschwitz must absolutely become a place of absolute silence, nonprayer, nontestimony, evidence of paroxysm and havoc. . . . Let us all, together, make ours the words of the psalmist, "For you, Lord, the silence alone is prayer."

The Poles meanwhile were apparently smoldering over the demand for the Carmelite nuns to be moved. Slowly some reports seeped into the media that the nuns were praying for 500,000 Roman Catholic Poles who had died at Auschwitz and that the Jews were disregarding the Poles' right to Auschwitz as a memorial, which they felt was sacred to them also.

The pope also met with the Jews in Warsaw in June 1987. The media reported the meeting without significant themes stemming from it. Because of the handling of the Carmelite issue by French, Belgian, and Polish cardinals, it was apparently viewed as a local affair in which the Vatican itself and the pope were not involved. The first complaint about the Carmelites had come from France, had been involved with a funding appeal from Belgium, and the convent about which the complaint arose was located in Poland.



Very soon stories began to appear in the media: the Jews were pointing out that the warehouse once stored the Zyklon-B gas which, they alleged, had been used to exterminate inmates at the camp.

The trouble begins

On August 31 and September 1, 1987, the pope held a "summit meeting" with Jewish leaders both at the Vatican and at Castel Gandolfo, Italy. Both meetings, again, as reported by the media, were trouble free. The pope promised the Jewish leaders at the meetings to prepare a document on both anti-Semitism and the *Shoah* (or so-called holocaust). The international coalition of Jewish leaders was headed by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of New York and the study was to be sponsored by the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, formed in 1970 to promote inter-faith dialogue between Jewish and Vatican leaders.

Tanenbaum was especially anxious to have an "apostolic letter" result from the study and emphasized both the extent and the seriousness of the dialogues which were scheduled for February 20-24, 1989, in Zurich, Switzerland.

Later, on September 11, 1987, on the occasion of his trip to the United States, the pope met with a group of American Jewish leaders in Miami, Florida. They were angered that in the interim period of their meetings with him in Italy and in the United States, he had welcomed Kurt Waldheim, the current president of Austria, to the Vatican. On that occasion the relations of Roman Catholics and Jews actually deteriorated. Kurt Waldheim had served as an officer in an Austrian Nazi army unit which had been accused by the Jews of committing war crimes. The fact of the meeting with Waldheim heightened the debate over whether the Vatican did all it could to help Jews in World War II.

For some time before the papal visit to Miami, the Jews had even threatened to call off their meeting with the pope over

the Waldheim incident. The conference did, however, occur and its objectives were twofold: (1) to express the pain and anger of the Jews over the Waldheim incident and (2) to obtain a full diplomatic relationship between Israel and the Holy See. The pope again agreed that there would be forthcoming "a [Roman] Catholic document on the *Shoah* [the pope avoided the word holocaust] and anti-Semitism." Apparently he did not back down on the Waldheim incident, as the media did not report on that aspect. The pope also, personally, agreed that the religious and historical implications of the *Shoah* for Christians and Jews would be taken up formally by the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee.

Judaism Über Alles

Curiously, at that meeting the assembled Jewish leaders of the United States gave a forthright notice to the pope that the Jews have decided that they must have dominion over the world:

A basic belief of our Jewish faith is the need "to mend the world under the sovereignty of God" (*L'takken olam b'malkhut Shaddai*). To mend the world means to do God's work in the world. . . . Your presence here in the United States affords us the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the sacred imperative of *tikkum olam* (the mending of the world).

To all of this the pope replied that "the Church must preach Jesus Christ to the world."

Actually, the Jewish world community has for a number of years been attempting to advise the head of the Roman Catholic church what he may or may not do. For example, it objected to his meeting with Palestine Liberation Organization members, and especially with Yasser Arafat in 1982.

Again in 1988 the Jews criticized the pope's visit to Austria's Mauthausen

concentration camp, where he said a mass. At the time he gave communion to a group which included Austria's President Waldheim, again causing an uproar in the international Jewish community.

The first meeting for the projected future love affair between the Vatican and the Jews, however, remained unchanged — the conference of scholars would meet in Zurich, Switzerland, in February 1989 — after the removal of the Carmelite nuns outside the Auschwitz camp. The year 1988 passed without further major interruptions or deterioration in the relationship of the pope and the Jews.

Ah! The fateful date

As the date for the conference approached, on February 22, 1989, it was discovered that the nuns had not been removed from their convent. In fact, it was found at this time that the convent had been remodeled and expanded from the funding received through the Belgian appeal. Not only had construction not as yet begun on the nuns' new residence, but no land had been purchased and there was no decision as to where it should be located.

The media did not really promote the story at this time. But since Jews from Europe and the United States traveled to Auschwitz to demonstrate in front of the convent, apparently there was communication among European, Middle Eastern, and American Jews.

Anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism

Soon the media began to have some snide asides about the traditional anti-Semitism of the Poles — who, it was often pointed out, are Roman Catholic. Any time that Judaism is attacked, anywhere, by anyone, the red-herring reply given by rabbis, and other spokesmen for *this religion* is that such criticism is a manifestation of anti-Semitism. As we say down here in Texas, "That dawg don't hunt no more." Judaism is a religion, not a race.

The Arabs, whom the Jews loathe, are Semites, as were the Babylonians, Assyrians, Aramaeans, Canaanites, and Phoenicians. Arafat and the members of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as well as all of the Arabs in the Middle East, would be horrified to learn that any criticism of Judaism was an anti-Semitic attack against them. There is really not that much disagreement anymore among scholars concerned with the forced conversion to Judaism of the entire Khazar empire in A.D. 740 and, after its defeat by Russia, the subsequent Khazar immigration to Poland ca. 1000 and thereafter. This is taken as the source of what are now known as Ashkenazic Jews. The Sephardic Jews, who came to Europe, spent first a thousand years in Spain before moving on to form communities in England, France, and Holland.

Jews do not have a monopoly on the identification "Semites."

Remember history

The pope tried to stay out of the growing conflict, but Jewish leaders; such as Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, urged him to enter the fray.

It was quite suddenly and openly, during the Auschwitz news debate, that the treatment of the Jews through the 1600-year dominance of the Western world by the Christians, especially the Roman Catholic church, was brought to the front. The New Testament, it was now candidly pointed out, placed a burden of collective guilt upon the Jews as "Christ killers." Certain historians delighted in noting that every racial law put into operation by Hitler had been preceded by similar Roman Catholic church laws from the fourth century forward: special types of clothing, hats, the yellow Star of David, the ghettos had all been Roman Catholic inventions. In addition, subtle reminders were placed that the Roman Catholic church embraced Hitler and that its concordat signed with him in 1933 gave legitimacy to his regime be-

fore the world. Pius XII, the media suddenly discovered at this time, had been a notorious Germanophile, having been papal envoy to Germany for many years. It was not until John XXIII was installed as pope that the Roman Catholic church's support of fascism was somewhat diminished. Since this has been known to historians and scholars throughout the world for decades, it was surprising that it could capture headlines in the media in 1989.

At this time Protestant groups were also getting into the act, making statements of the treatment of the Jews during the reign of Roman Catholicism and, especially, what went on in Poland. Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, they noted, Poles had taken up an anti-Semitic stand. They undertook anti-Jewish actions, forced Jews into ghettos, persecuted Jews for being Jews. And, when Hitler built Auschwitz, the Protestant groups pointed out, the Poles were silent. In 1936, Cardinal Hlond, as primate of the church in Poland, issued a pastoral order publicly encouraging a boycott of Jewish businesses. The mutual hatred of the Poles and the Jews had been legendary, even in the United States. One prominent Protestant theologian, Martin E. Marty, remarked in late September:

An Auschwitz left empty recalls the story of Polish Judaism, while the presence and sound of almost-quiet Carmelites distorts the story and dishonors those murdered there.

Poland

Of the approximately 3,000,000 Jews who once occupied Poland about 5,000 (some media report 6,000 to 10,000) remain and apparently they are all "assimilated" into the Polish culture. Poland now has a population of 38,000,000, 95 percent of whom are Roman Catholic. There was no cry of alarm, it was pointed out, from any of the Polish Jews about the nunnery. And, suddenly, the

number of Roman Catholics who died in the camp began to escalate until it reached the figure of 2,000,000, including 3,000 priests and nuns. In April, local residents in the town of Oswiecim (formerly Auschwitz), angered at the criticism of the Jews, sent a protest signed by 1,375 people to *Slowo Powszechnie*, a pro-government Catholic newspaper in Warsaw.

So's your old man! Oh yeah? Yours too!

The Roman Catholics and the Poles next called attention to the fact that a Carmelite convent established in 1985 at the Dachau concentration camp near Munich, West Germany, next to the Jewish memorial, has not provoked the same kind of outrage from the Jews.

The Jews countered that Auschwitz "had a special meaning to Jews." The Poles responded that Auschwitz was especially significant to Polish history. Poland had been the first country occupied by the Nazis, and Auschwitz "very quickly became the premier camp for the extermination of the Polish leadership groups, as part of the Nazi plan to reduce the Polish nation to servitude."

Others got into the act. On April 15, leaders of the World Evangelical Fellowship branded Judaism insufficient for salvation and pledged "the evangelizing of Jewish people as a priority."

Trouble brewing

The group of Jewish leaders in Rome cancelled a meeting with Pope John Paul II after the Vatican said it would not discuss the Roman Catholic convent at Auschwitz that has "offended many Jews," a member of the Jewish group reported on May 15, 1989. As released to the media, the core of the dispute with the Vatican, the Jews stated, was the dozen Carmelite nuns "on the site" of the "Nazi death camp" in Poland, where "six million Jews" had been "murdered in the Holocaust." A meeting had been scheduled at the Vatican for Friday, May 19, 1989. Rabbi David Rosen of the Anti-

Defamation League of B'nai B'rith was the spokesman for the prospective group of Jewish leaders from both the United States and Israel. However, in preliminary talks the week before, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity said that church leaders had been unable to approve the agenda of the proposed talks. With the media as it is today, it is very difficult to know what may have actually occurred. Father Stanislaw Musial, a Polish Jesuit priest, remarking on the cancellation, cautioned:

Our Jewish friends can be sure the convent will be transferred. *It must happen soon because the issue could generate anti-Semitism in Poland.* (Emphasis added.)

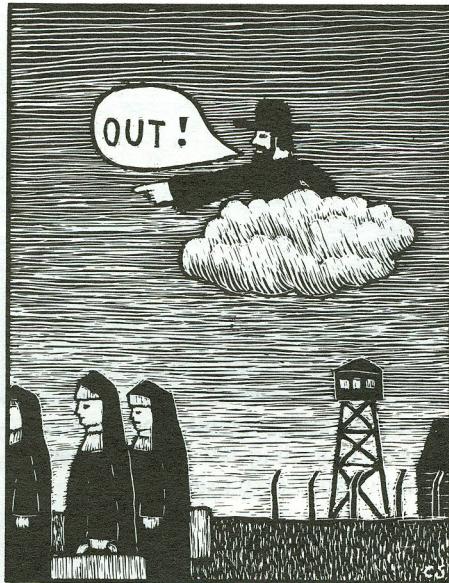
Generally speaking, the Poles did want the nuns to stay on. The pro-government lay Roman Catholic group PAX published an open letter assailing the plans to move the nuns. The letter accused the "Jewish side" of "illegal demands . . . to ruthlessly carry out an illegal eviction." The paper *Slowo Pow-szczene* argued that the convent was not actually inside the camp, that any alleged killing of Jews was not in Auschwitz but at the much-larger subsidiary camp, Birkenau, about a mile away.

Krzysztof Sliwinski, a Roman Catholic journalist, saw the controversy as:

a sort of unresolved tension between [Roman] Catholics and Jews . . . [characterized by] deep misunderstandings, resentments and mutual ignorance.

He saw the Poles as being unable to even imagine why anyone would object to nuns being next to a camp where so many had died.

Meanwhile the bishops of Poland reaffirmed that they intended to move the nuns but that they had run into "difficulties."



As Oswiecim is for Jews a symbol of Shoah (remembrance), for Poles it remains the place of bloody martyrdom of the Polish nation.

At this point it was agreed by all that the issue of the nuns had become public (imagine that!) and that it had to be resolved. The new site location was not, however, approved by the Polish government until June 1989. The approval alone was given, but the land itself was not acquired at this point.

Intervening at this time, and adding fuel to the fire was a declaration of four thousand evangelists meeting in the Philippines on July 4. This proclamation declared that it would be "a form of anti-Semitism" not to try to convert Jews to Christianity.

Enter Weiss

On July 14, 1989, Rabbi Avraham Weiss, of the Hebrew Institute of New York, together with six of his students occupied the Roman Catholic nunnery at Auschwitz to insist that the nuns leave. He angrily demanded this "in respect to the Jews who died there." But the workmen repairing and renovating the convent beat the protestor-intruders and dragged them from the nunnery. About twenty people, including the nuns, watched what was later alleged to be uniformed and plainclothes police assault the protestors. Weiss called the convent a "desecration" of the Jews' memory. He protested that the nuns watched from a window of the convent and did nothing to stop the workers from punching and kicking him and his

students, dousing them with buckets of water, and finally dragging them out of the convent grounds. Weiss then demanded an apology from the nuns. He and his students left with bruises, scrapes, and bleeding noses and lips. Ultimately questioned by the media, he proclaimed that he was protesting the failure of the Roman Catholic authorities to meet the February deadline to relocate the nunnery.

The Polish side of the story was that Weiss and his fellows (maybe students, maybe not) armed with protest placards and bearing Israeli flags, climbed a seven-foot, wrought-iron fence in order to enter the nunnery and occupy it for six hours. Once inside, they began to pray and demanded that the nuns leave. Weiss loudly proclaimed to the nuns and world, "Our patience has run out." His later explanation was that his intrusion into the nunnery was "a nonviolent protest," and he fumed that "people should understand what peaceful nonviolent protest is all about."

Theo Klein (past president of the European Jewish Congress) wrote to Cardinal Decourtray on July 20 that "all dialogue and official meetings" between the Vatican and the Jews were "frozen" until the Carmelite convent dispute was resolved.

World media extensively covered the Weiss confrontation. And, the week after, several hundred Jewish students returned for "a peaceful protest." Almost immediately another deadline for the removal of the nuns became July 22. The Jews, however, throughout the world, insisted that the "presence of the nuns desecrated the memory of the 4 million, mostly Jews, killed in the Auschwitz gas chambers," as the number of Jews who died at Auschwitz mounted with every media report. However, July 22 came and went and the move not being made by that date, the Jews accused the Roman Catholic church of unilaterally breaking agreements. The Jews, by this time, were also noticeably offended, generally, that the Roman Catholic

church has tended to downplay what they perceive as the Nazis' genocidal intent.

Back in the United States, Weiss, attempting to put as much fuel on the fire as possible, said that the Polish workers "threw buckets of water mixed with urine and paint over our heads, and shouted anti-Semitic slogans."

The pope speaks — but not of Auschwitz

The Jews were pinning much of their hope on an intervention by the pope into the situation. But he was disinclined to become embroiled in the issue.

On August 2, the pope gave a discourse on the beginnings of Christianity. In this, some of the media reported that he had made several remarks concerned with the Jews, most notably that through their "infidelity" and "hardness of heart" they had broken their covenant with god. The Anti-Defamation League jumped upon the statements to call them "unavoidably prejudicial." Another media source gave a longer quotation from the pope, indicating that he had started by acknowledging that god had covenanted with the *ancient* Israelites to be "his special people... on condition that they remained faithful to his law."

But the history of the Old Testament shows many instances of Israel's infidelity to God. Hence, God sent the prophets as his messengers to call the people to conversion, to warn them of their hardness of heart and to foretell a new covenant still to come... established through Christ's redemptive sacrifice and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It was hardly the report that had first hit the media wires. But then, the media-quoted reply from Rabbi David Rosen of the Anti-Defamation League was not accurate either:

Anyone reading these words

may fairly conclude from them that God's covenant with the Jewish people is superseded by the Christian covenant as the only everlasting covenant. The implications regarding Jews and Judaism are unavoidably prejudicial.

And so everyone was back to the starting point. Christians have attempted to convert Jews since the inception of Christianity — the theoretics of which, incidentally, began only with Jews, headed by Jesus Christ — a Jew, spread by Paul — a Jew, and based intrinsically on the Jewish Old Testament.

The pope continued his remarks in a number of utterances within about a two-week period. On August 9 he added to his prior remarks:

The Jews are no longer God's special people because of their infidelity in God. God's covenant with the Jews has been superseded by His new covenant with Christians. This new covenant comes through Christ.

On August 16, he further broadened his remarks:

In the old covenant, God chose Israel to be His own possession, His chosen people. But Israel was also called upon to be holy, to reflect her consecration to God by the holiness of their way of life.

Under the new covenant Christians have a new and eternal covenant through Jesus Christ. Christians are consecrated as members of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, through the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The American Jewish Committee director, Rabbi James Rudin, replied:

The Pope has cast doubt on the validity, the authenticity and the legitimacy of Judaism. Theological

anti-Semitism can have serious implications and cannot be dismissed. It affects people's behavior toward Jews throughout the world.

The Jewish Anti-Defamation League representative to the Vatican, Rabbi David Rosen, added:

The Pope's accusation that we are no longer heirs of the covenant due to many instances of Jewish infidelity to God is without a doubt prejudicial.

The pope's remarks were actually theologically outrageous and, of a consequence, a formal protest was made by the Jewish Anti-Defamation League to the Vatican.

Super lie

But the Jews countered with an absurd release to the media: a story that at the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholic church leaders had agreed in a document titled "In Our Era" (*Nostra Aetate*) that god's covenant with the Jews was irrevocable and that they should not be forced to convert to Christianity. Now, other Jewish leaders saw the pope's remarks as an abrogation of *Nostra Aetate*. New York Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, an official Jewish observer at Vatican II, helped, he claimed, to have shaped that document. He called the papal remarks arrogant and "regrettable and clearly unacceptable to any self-respecting Jew." He quickly found support from the Rev. John Pawlikowski, a leading scholar on Catholic-Jewish relations and a professor of ethics at the [Roman] Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Pawlikowski concluded that the pontiff's comments were reason for "not only Jews but people in the [Roman] Catholic community to ask serious questions."

This interpretation of *Nostra Aetate* is a very serious deliberate falsification. On September 11, 1965, the Second Vat-

ican Council issued a "Declaration of the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christians." It consisted of 1,117 words and dealt with Roman Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and slightly with Judaism. There is no way that the text can be tortured into an interpretation that "god's covenant with the Jews was irrevocable." In regard to the Jews, the entire declaration said only the following:

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation, nor did the Jews in large number accept the gospel; indeed, not a few opposed the spreading of it. Nevertheless, according to the apostle, the Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, for He does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues. In company with the prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him with one accord."

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred Synod wishes to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit above all of biblical and theological studies, and of brotherly dialogues.

True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ, still, what happened in His passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed the holy Scriptures.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum should know better than to give in today's history a



disingenuous interpretation to the above proclamation.

Actually the remarks of the pope were much more seriously threatening to the Jews than the situation with the nuns. It is, however, impossible for any group in the world to go heads on with the pope, the Vicar of Christ on Earth, the single acknowledged representative of god himself. His symbolism is too powerful to challenge.

The Geneva accord "abrogated"

The archbishop of Krakow, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, had thought originally that a solution could be an ecumenical prayer center near the death camp, but after the incident with Weiss he stated:

such acts and such conduct go against construction of the center.

He therefore, on August 10, after the pope's pronouncements, revoked the Geneva agreement and accused Western Jewish leaders of conducting "a violent campaign of accusations and defamations."

This kind of attitude and behavior makes it impossible for me to create the center as I had planned. In this climate of aggressive demands and uncertainty which has sprung up between us, it is not possible for us to work side by side . . . without violating our personal religious convictions.

In "indefinitely suspending" (if that is equivalent to "revoking"), he cited "a violent campaign of accusations and slanders by the Jews" and that he could not proceed in an "atmosphere of aggressive demands."

The World Jewish Congress immediately assailed his words as "brutal and

violent" and "a tragic blow" to ecumenical efforts.

Macharski's announcement led one of the four cardinals involved, Albert Decourtray of Lyon, France, to issue his own declaration that the 1987 agreement must be honored since the demonstrations and hostile climate "cannot outweigh the accord."

The Jewish response to the archbishop was to accuse him of anti-Semitism. Macharski rejoined that such a facility would have been a meeting place for people of all nations and religions — including Jews. He did, however, feel that it should house the group of Carmelite nuns that the Jews insisted be moved. Also, immediately, the European Union of Jewish Students, out of Brussels, Belgium, accused Macharski of a breach of the 1987 accord signed in Geneva. In Jerusalem, to which he had retreated, Weiss called Macharski's remarks "repugnant" and charged that Macharski was simply trying "to break the Jewish-Catholic accord providing for the removal of the convent" by suggesting an ecumenical prayer center with the nuns in it.

Immediately New York Cardinal John J. O'Connor expressed faith in Macharski's good intentions. Curiously, within a month O'Connor changed his position entirely. Appearing on the WNBC-TV "New Forum" on September 17, he stated that he supported the Jewish efforts to get the Roman Catholic convent closed — but that is another part of the story.

In the interim, on August 22 Macharski met with Zevulun Hammer, the Israeli minister for religious affairs, and urged him to help remove the convent from the headlines and stop the Jewish protest. The American response to this action came from the American Jewish Committee:

We hope Cardinal Macharski's repudiation of the agreement he signed in [1987] will not be his final word on this painful subject.

His concern for the human and religious dignity of the Carmelite nuns should also have been accompanied by concern for the human and religious dignity of Jews for whom Auschwitz stands as the ultimate embodiment of the Shoah.

All of this elicited only more bitterness, for the Poles could not accept that only Jews were victims of the Nazis. They resented that the old history of the anti-Semitism of the Poles was cited to suggest that perhaps the Poles had somehow been partly responsible for the Shoah.

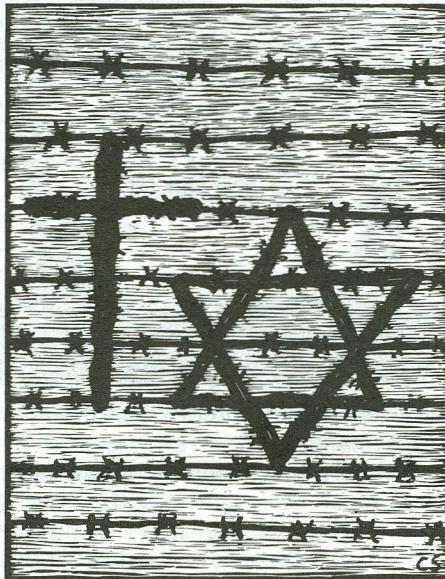
The Poles wanted the Jews to recognize that when the Jews casually said that 500,000 "others" died at Auschwitz, that was wrong since at least 1,000,000 who died were Roman Catholic Poles, human beings, once living flesh and bones. Basically they admitted that anti-Semitism had existed in Poland for many hundreds of years, but pointed out that the Poles did not invent anti-Semitism and held no exclusive patent on it.

To hell with the Jews

Pat Buchanan, former White House communications director for President Reagan, and devout Roman Catholic, was not about to let the fray go on without his input. In his syndicated column of August 16, he denounced the attempt to move the convent or the nuns.

Let me give a dissenting view, held by many orthodox [Roman] Catholics. Those who preach loudest the need for "sensitivity" seem rarely to make an effort to constrain their hostility to [Roman] Catholicism.

No, we were not scandalized by the Carmelite nuns' decision; what we find scandalous is any suggestions that Auschwitz is somehow defiled by a dozen nuns praying for the souls of all who



died there. . . .

Well, excuse me, but to hell with the slanderers and God bless the nuns at Auschwitz.

A travel boycott

Especially active in the continuing Auschwitz protest was Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, who complained particularly of the location of the Carmelite nuns:

We simply feel that a place like Auschwitz and the death camps of Poland are places that deserve silence. The people who died here were victims of the silence and apathy of the world.

One wire story reported that the Wiesenthal Center claims a membership of 37,000. Another reported 370,000 of which 40,000 were in Chicago. Whatever the figure, Cooper immediately sent out an "emergency" mailing encouraging those members to fill out a short petition and send it to President Wojciech Jaruzelski asking that the Polish government intervene to prompt the Roman Catholic church into action. In a press interview, Cooper revealed that a resolution had been pushed through the United Nations in 1972 which identified Auschwitz as a location that was inviolate and should never be changed.

Cooper was adamant that "there is a battle here over the custodian of the memory of the Holocaust." In attempting to enlist pressure from the United States, he caustically noted,

From our discussions with them, the only thing Polish secular authorities seem to care about is whether they will get hard currency.

He therefore threatened to stop the "hundreds of tour groups (which) bring thousands of Jewish visitors each year" to the former Nazi camps. This travel boycott was in turn denounced by Rabbi James Rudin, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, who claimed that Roman Catholic-Jewish relations were at their most critical point since 1965 when John XXIII held the Second Vatican Council. Michael Kotzin, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council (a coalition of thirty-seven Jewish organizations in Chicago), also denounced the proposed travel boycott. Yet the boycott was called. In the perilous finances of our times, a boycott against travel to any nation deprives that nation of lucrative income.

Sometime in August the religious affairs minister of Israel, Zevulun Hammer, paid an official visit to Poland, the first in twenty-two years. He issued a statement there that:

They [unnamed Polish officials] agree it [the agreement to move the nuns] must be implemented, but they claim they have some difficulties in the community, in the church.

They claim that maybe there was some naivete in signing such a contract without speaking beforehand with all the parts of the community, so they want time to explain what the Jewish pain is in this matter.

Cardinal Jozef Glemp

With the Poles obviously under siege, Cardinal Jozef Glemp entered the fray when he addressed the "dear Jewish people" during a mass for 100,000 pilgrims at a Polish national shrine, Our

Religious problems are causing us to give up our God

vicious persecution by the church as early as the fourth century A.D., and Chaucer documents corruption at practically every level of the church hierarchy. Renaissance popes were a byword for immorality, greed, and arrogance. Incessant religious wars, the sadistic practices of the Inquisition, years of witch-hunting and torturing — it is estimated that nine million people died in agony in the name of religion between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Wars in the Near East and Northern Ireland remind us every day of the murderous element in religion today.

Churches of all denominations have a poor record in other respects. They have consistently obstructed scientific inquiry, as well as philosophical theorizing that might endanger entrenched authority. Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for the appalling crime of postulating the infinity of the universe and the basic unity of all substances. If he had lived in a later period he might have won a Nobel prize. The church also imprisoned and did its best to silence Galileo, obliged Descartes to flee France for Protestant Holland to save his skin, and forced Buffon to recant his theories. It has furiously resisted new knowledge down through the ages, since such knowledge exposes the fallacies and absurdities of the Bible.

Churches are still denying evolution, which is fundamental in all contemporary science. The demands of "creationists" that their discredited ideas be incorporated in science curricula have been an ongoing nuisance, and have in some states seriously impaired scientific education.

In short, religions have steadfastly set their faces against scientific truth, because it cannot be reconciled with the superstitions in the Bible.

Religion cannot, my small relative to the contrary, make you either wise or virtuous. What it does is let you sound pious. Evangelical preachers habitually call wearily on the names of god and Jesus, and gullible listeners confuse this

with goodness, though surely it must be obvious that pious talk cannot be equated with good behaviour.

"Turn away from sin and believe in the good news!" shouted Father Hickey, who was acclaimed as an eloquent preacher.

It is difficult to imagine a more loathsome sin than the abuse and debauchery of helpless children, and Hickey signally failed to turn away from it. How can such hypocrisy continue to impose on the world, and why is not the church more ashamed of it?

Religion and mental health

In a recent column, Frank R. Zindler pointed out that religion has a direct relationship with mental disorders and social maladaptation:

Religion itself is crazy, and theology has been described as "systematized insanity." . . . The notion that there is a spirit world which can affect our lives involves delusional thinking and may derive from hallucinatory experiences and illusions. Most religions reinforce obsessional and compulsive behavior (e.g., rosary exercises, frequently scheduled prayers, thinking incessantly about "sin," etc.).

With their inability to create logically consistent systems of thought and action, and with their often fragmented, inconsistent, and reality-ignoring claims about the world, most religions appear to be the apotheosis of schizophrenia. Holy books such as Ezekiel and Revelation bear great resemblance to the effusions of schizophrenics. . . . [R]eligions inhibit the development of self-reliant, self-assertive behavior and reinforce infantile, dependent behavior. ("Religiosity as a Mental Disorder," *American Atheist*, April 1988.)

Religion does not make you good,

and it is frequently bad for your health. Why do we consider it sacred and holy? Why are we constrained to speak in low reverent tones of the supernatural? Why do we put God in Capitals even when He is only a pronoun?

Worship: the fear factor

To understand, we have to go back to the childhood of the human race, when everything inexplicable and frightening was attributed to supernatural forces — gods, demons, spirits, et al. "Some god has done this," Odysseus frequently remarked, wearily. Storms occurred when a god became annoyed and started tossing thunderbolts about. Yahweh, the god of the Israelites, was one such deity. He frequently dealt in lethal hailstones, according to Joshua and Ezekiel. He was practically indistinguishable, in early manifestations, from Zeus, Baal, Odin, Osiris, and other gods of the period — all furious hurlers of thunderbolts and senders of floods, plagues, famines, etc. Yahweh/Jehovah seemed to be in a tantrum for most of the Old Testament. That he was a war-god is evident from the Book of Joshua.

Angry gods had to be placated and propitiated with sacrifice, prayer, and ritual. You could never be sure when or why they were going to fly into a rage: were the floods and earthquakes and volcanic eruptions sent because you committed, unwittingly, some sin? It was dangerous even to speak their names, and they must always be referred to in low, respectful voices, for fear you might offend them and start up the thunderbolts again.

In short, we pretend gods are holy and sacred because we are afraid of them. Annoy them and you get zapped. The Furies were called Eumenides, "the sweet-tempered ones," because if they heard you calling them Erinyes, or Furies, they would be on your trail at once.

Zeus and Baal, Osiris and Odin, have faded into myth. Unfortunately their contemporary, Jehovah (a.k.a. Allah)

But when religion is tyrannical and intolerant, insisting on special privilege, demanding universal acceptance and murdering dissenters, it forfeits all respect. A healthful spot of blasphemy is strongly indicated.

still terrorizes his followers and demands abject behaviour, as witness the frenzy over *The Satanic Verses*. Our fear of offending the angry deity is a holdover from the threats of hideous punishments handed down to us in the Bible.

The Bible is not an inspired guide to morality that will guarantee direct access to heaven. It is a highly prejudiced, jingoistic account of a small nation still in the nomadic, herdkeeping stage of social evolution. The people were aggressive, superstitious, patriarchal, and nationalistic, suspicious of everyone and everything beyond their own small domain. But they cast envious eyes on more prosperous country, which their god obligingly promised to them, ignoring the fact that it was already occupied. How can this be justified? How would Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson react if an army of ruffians marched onto their property announcing that their god had promised it to them? Of course, if the invaders behaved like the Israelites, Pat and Jerry wouldn't have much choice: they would be slaughtered like the Amorites and the inhabitants of Eglon.

God, in short, reflected the qualities of the people who wrote the book, and since there were many contributors, he is bewilderingly inconsistent. The brutal warlord of Joshua, the narrow lawgiver of Leviticus, the schizophrenic lunatic of the prophetic books, are totally incompatible with the benign shepherd of the Psalms; and both are unrecognizable in the sadistic, if eloquent, enigma who tormented poor Job to win a bet with satan (with whom he seemed to be on easy social terms).

However, there was another set of gods with less repellent characteristics. Jessie L. Weston wrote in *From Ritual to Romance*:

The name of the god and certain details of the ritual may differ . . . but whether he hails from Babylon, Phrygia, or Phoenicia, whether he be called Tammuz, Attis, or Adonis, the main lines of the story are fixed

and invariable. . . . Always he is the victim of a tragic and untimely death, a death which entails bitter loss and misfortune upon a mourning world, and which, for the salvation of that world, is followed by a resurrection.

Jesus is one of this pantheon, which began as nature gods associated with the seasons and the fertility of crops and herds. They all died premature and violent deaths as sacrifices to redeem the world; after a brief sojourn in the dark underworld they were resurrected, rising again to general rejoicing: life could go on, all nature revived, and fertility was restored. Women wept at their sepulchres, a kind of magic to hasten the resurrection. (Ezekiel rants about the impiety of "women weeping for Tammuz.") Other manifestations are Baldur in Scandinavia and Krishna in India. It is a universal myth, personifying spring and the return of plenty. Tammuz et al have long since been recognized as pure myth, but Christians continue to insist that their version is literal truth.

Gods are created by men, and we make them in our own image. Belief in their literal existence, their intervention in human affairs, belongs to the childhood of the race. Surely there are enough genuine problems confronting the world without fighting over nonexistent deities.

The promise of life after death

One more factor should be considered in assessing the sanctity of religion, and this is the fear of death. It has been remarked that people yearn for eternal life, though they don't know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday, whereas Albert Einstein, who never had enough time for all the things he wanted to do, observed, "I cannot believe that the individual survives the death of his body, although feeble souls harbour such thoughts through fear and ridiculous egotism."

Atheism, which takes the scientific

position, is often equated (by the superstitious and uninstructed) with satanism and general evil-doing. Such equations are manifestly absurd: Atheists do not believe in satan or in any supernatural being. Nor would they dream of imposing a death sentence on a man for writing a book, even one that abused them. They have not sent hit men against Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, or Archbishop Hunthausen of Seattle, all of whom have made libelous attacks on Atheists.

"Freedom to speak or print carries no immunity from the fury released when the sacred is besmirched," wrote Rabbi Jordan Pearlson, apropos of the Rushdie affair, in the *Toronto Star*, 25 March 1989.

Is fury an appropriate response, rabbi? Doest thou well to be angry? What about that much-quoted advice on turning the other cheek?

A conference of Islamic foreign ministers urged the international community to ban distribution of *The Satanic Verses* and to pass laws to protect religious beliefs. Publishers were asked not to publish books that insult or ridicule religious sentiment. But this covers a lot of ground and, as mentioned, some of it is seriously in need of criticism. And who decides which is religion and which heresy or heathenism or superstition?

I personally deplore all religions, but I admit to feeling curmudgeonly about decrying it to simple souls who genuinely believe and who find it comforting. But when religion is tyrannical and intolerant, insisting on special privilege, demanding universal acceptance and murdering dissenters, it forfeits all respect. A healthful spot of blasphemy is strongly indicated.

Only by facing the truth and accepting responsibility for ourselves can we become adults. Cowering under the Linus-blanket of superstition, we remain perennially immature, stunted children who are afraid to step out into the light of the real world. *

loyally negotiated over two years. . . . If four cardinals, including the archbishop of Krakow, are not qualified to represent the [Roman] Catholic side, who might be?"

And a spokesman for the World Jewish Congress agreed with the three cardinals: "We reject any suggestion of its renegotiation."

On September 16, Solidarity leader Lech Walesa revealed that Fay Cashman, a correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post*, warned him that foreign investment in Poland might be "impeded" unless the convent was closed. At the same time an invitation to Walesa to visit Israel was cancelled.

By the end of September, throughout the world every media had an opportunity to reinforce the figure "6,000,000 Jews murdered by Hitler" and thump away that the Roman Catholic church had not honored its obligation to remove the convent.

Glemp was scheduled to visit Chicago September 21-25 and to make an extended tour to Cleveland, Detroit, and Milwaukee, but Chicago Jewish leaders declined invitations to the ecumenical service and reception to be held for him by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. With hostility and pressures increasing by September 8, Cardinal Bernardin had a private meeting with leaders of powerful Jewish groups, of which the American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League, Chicago Board of Rabbis and Jewish Community Relations Council stated that they would protest Glemp's arrival "in an appropriate but dignified vehicle of expression." Privately Bernardin agreed with the Jewish leaders that the convent should be moved but declined to make a public statement, since it would put him in a delicate position if Glemp arrived. The next day the Jewish group issued a statement supporting the move of the convent, to which Bernardin was then forced to agree. Two days later, on September 6, Glemp issued a statement that he was postponing his trip to the United States because



of "circumstances not favorable." Again the Jews were jubilant.

David Gad-Harf, the executive director of the Jewish Community Council in Detroit, immediately said that the next step for Glemp would be to retract his words and apologize.

I think it is clear that Cardinal Glemp got the message that his statements were poorly received by the American public and his planned trip to the United States would be less than welcome.

Shamir gets into the act

The situation deteriorated further when Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir accused the Poles on September 8, as reported that day in the *Jerusalem Post*, of having anti-Semitic feelings so deep that "they suck it in with their mother's milk. This is something that is deeply imbued in their tradition, their mentality, like their loathing for Russia." Shamir's remarks, naturally not widely reported, when mentioned were muted in the Western mass media.

But Polish President Wojciech Jaruzelski reacted sharply to Shamir's "suck in anti-Semitism with their mother's milk" statement. He told a news conference in Warsaw that Shamir's remarks "contradict the long tradition of Polish-Jewish co-existence in Poland." The comments also touched off vehement protests from Poles in the United States who strongly protested to the Israeli consulate-general in Chicago. The substance of the Poles' complaint and resentment, again at this point, was that it

appeared the Jews were attempting to appropriate Auschwitz as a wholly Jewish place of memory. There was much bitterness among the Poles at an assumption that only Jews were victims.

Invokes a response

The Jews, just generally infuriated by Glemp, escalated their assault. For example, a Jewish "holocaust survivor," Noah Klieger, speaking out in *Newsweek* (September 11, 1989) said,

Sure, Poles were killed too, but so what? Auschwitz is the symbol of the Jewish holocaust.

But a Solidarity office explained it all:

The conduct of the [Roman] Catholics over this event has been immoral, and the conduct of the Jews has been fanatical.

On September 11 (or the 14th), a curious development unfolded. Lionel Kopelowitz, president of the European Jewish Congress, announced that the dialogue between Jews and Roman Catholics was not frozen. Almost immediately, a press conference was called in which Theo Klein, the past president of the group, charged that the dialogue was frozen, and so pronounced by him in his July 20 letter to Cardinal Decourtray. Kopelowitz, sitting beside Klein at the press conference, remained quiet while Klein went on further to say that he had said "frozen"

because this decision was the decision of the Jewish delegation, and all the work of the Jewish delegation was approved by the conference.

But, after the press conference, Haim Pinner, general secretary of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said Klein's interpretation of freezing formal contacts was "reasonably fair, but perhaps he went too far." At the same time, Alan

Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, told the *New York Times* that the European group stood by the freeze between the Vatican and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultation and that this umbrella group had voted to postpone a conference as long as the convent controversy remained.

The Jews then escalated the charges by saying they are deeply offended by the Christian symbolism on the perimeter of the camp, including a twenty-three-foot-tall wooden cross, and suddenly that cross became a major part of the argument.

One letter writer to the *Chicago Tribune* (September 23, 1989) put it this way:

... As one who had members of his family murdered by the Germans at Auschwitz, I resent having the site of their murder placed under the shadow of the cross. Furthermore, the anti-Semitic remarks by Cardinal Glemp are reminiscent of those by Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels in the days before World War II.

What goes unsaid on this subject is that the entire controversy could have been put to rest immediately if the Vatican had done what was right and ordered the convent to move. But the Vatican was silent for weeks, just as it was silent before and during World War II.

Alexander Goldsmith

Theo Klein, who had led the Jewish delegation that signed the Geneva accord, finally said, on September 8, that the Catholic hierarchy before it attempted to resume talks could at least "remove the cross." One report in the *Los Angeles Times* of May 7, 1989, moaned that "there is a twenty-three-foot high cross standing on the largest Jewish graveyard in history."

However, the cross is most significant

in Roman Catholic Poland. The twenty-three-foot cross in question was first used during a mass celebrated at Auschwitz by Pope John Paul II on his first papal visit to his homeland and former archdiocese June 2-10, 1979. The cross then later appeared in the convent gardens in 1988. The removal of the cross, even its suggestion, was speculated to cause increased difficulties. The Poles at this time made certain that everyone knew that the pope had canonized Maximilian Kolbe, a popular Polish priest who took the place of a condemned Gentile at Auschwitz. The tale was calculated to prove that the Poles had heroes at Auschwitz. In addition, John Paul II had beatified Edith Stein, a German Jew who had converted and become a Carmelite nun.

In a letter to an Italian Catholic magazine, on September 11, the provincial superior of the Carmelites in Warsaw, Father Dominique Wider claimed that "the entire Polish society" was opposed to moving the nuns and did not accept "that others govern our country."

Basically this supported Cardinal Jozef Glemp's contention that he had resisted the Jewish demands as an infringement of the Polish people's national and religious prerogatives. Yet, later in September, he still made a plea for conciliation and mutual understanding to resolve the conflict. In an interview published in the Polish Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, he pleaded that it might be possible to renegotiate agreements to relocate the convent farther away from Auschwitz.

Macharski was also holding forth some hope for relocation of the convent, especially when the Vatican offered to help pay for construction of the prayer center at an alternate site. Land for such a site had been obtained about three thousand feet (a little over a half-mile) away from Auschwitz, but ground had not been broken as yet.

Shamir gets angry

On September 16, Israel's Prime Min-

ister Yitzhak Shamir was again interviewed by the *Jerusalem Post* and he angrily responded:

What! Can I kill every anti-Semite in the world? What I must try to do is to kill anti-Semitism. It evolved over centuries. Hatred of Jews is something profound, profoundly inherent in Gentile societies.

Enter the pope

Despite the outcries, the Vatican had continued to treat the issue as a local one, and the pope declined to become involved. Then on September 19, Dutch Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, head of the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism, announced that the Roman Catholic church was ready to see the nuns moved and would fund construction of an alternate prayer center near Auschwitz to speed their departure from that site.

In order to support the realization of its important, but costly project, the Holy See is ready to lend its own financial support.

The Holy See is convinced that such a center would contribute in an important way to development of good relations between Christians and Jews.

Exactly where, when, and how the prayer center would be built were being left to Polish church officials. Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum was caustic about the timing of the Vatican announcement and pointed out that the Vatican moved when it did because of a meeting, scheduled in early October, of the International Conference of Christians and Jews.

Hatred

Meanwhile pictures calculated to make Glemp appear remarkably ugly were printed in many hard media. The captions were chosen to arouse hatred of the man, such as that in the *Chicago*

Tribune, September 20, which read:

Polish primate Jozep Cardinal Glemp has stoked the fires of discord over the Carmelite convent near Auschwitz.

George Will, in his September 10 column, which appeared in the *Detroit News*, characterized Glemp as

a living museum exhibit of lumpen anti-Semitism. Lumpen anti-Semitism made possible the seizure of power by virulent anti-Semites.

A dinner truce

On September 22, Glemp flew to London ostensibly to consecrate a Polish Catholic church. While there (smile) he met with a group of Jewish leaders in London and reported "significant progress" as he compared the Jews in Great Britain ("very polite and nice and we reached some understanding") with those in the United States with "unpleasant behavior" as they laid siege to the convent in July. At the time Glemp had not heard of the Vatican's announcement, to which Jews across Europe and the United States were responding with glee. A typical statement was that of Seymour Reich, president of B'nai B'rith International:

I would hope the statement by the Vatican will encourage Cardinal Glemp to rethink the stereotypical anti-Semitic sentiments he expressed on this matter.

The Jewish leaders in London, with the exception of Britain's Chief Rabbi, Lord Immanuel Jakobits, who declined, met with Glemp and an agreement was reached that Glemp should write a letter to Sir Sigmund Sternberg, chairman of the International Council for Christians and Jews. The letter read in part:

It is my intention that the Geneva Declaration of 1987 should be im-



plemented, and I am therefore keen to work on a friendly dialogue between Christians and Jews.

The agreement and letter were disclosed at a dinner on September 20 at the home of Dr. Zbigniew Gertych, the Polish ambassador to Britain. Rabbi Jakobits showed up at the dinner and characterized Glemp's letter as a "substantial contribution to the re-establishment of [Roman] Catholic Jewish harmony." It was later agreed that the new Polish prime minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a Roman Catholic layman, and the ambassador had both played a role in ending the dispute. One report said that it was after the Glemp letter was issued that Rabbi Jakobits sent Glemp a letter with the above remark in it. Later, one report had Sir Sigmund Sternberg, who is also a Jewish philanthropist, reveal that the cardinal had asked him to not contribute money to the proposed center. Another report quoted:

He said he didn't want the money to come from Jewish sources, in accordance with the original agreement which said it should come from Christian sources.

Anyone who wants to believe either statement can. The original agreement had called for West European churches to fund the new center, but during the week before he went to London, Glemp reported that Zygmunt Nissenbaum, a Polish-born Jewish millionaire living in West Germany, had offered to help fund an ecumenical center. The estimated cost of the new center was put by Glemp at about \$2,000,000. On September 23, the Rev. Anthony Morello, general counselor of the Roman Catholic Carmelite order in Rome, said that the order would support moving the convent as agreed with Sir Sigmund Sternberg.

A thaw begins

On the same day Glemp was inter-



viewed again in his home in Warsaw. There he explained, but did not apologize for, his prior remarks. At this point, the World Jewish Congress said it would ask the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations to lift the freeze on formal Vatican-Jewish dialogue that had begun in February when the deadline for moving the Carmelite convent passed without any action.

But on September 27 a Dutch Roman Catholic university withdrew an invitation which it had extended to Glemp to speak.

A besieged Glemp on September 28 told the West German newspaper *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, "I am in no way anti-Semitic." He continued that the Jewish protests

in the form they took at Auschwitz hurt our [church's] and the nuns' dignity. . . . We want the Jews to understand us, especially the Jews in America, who talk a lot but do not understand the situation. We want them to develop a correct respect for the Poles.

It was especially meaningful to all persons concerned that the pope was formerly the archbishop of the diocese of Krakow, in southern Poland, in which Auschwitz and its companion camp, Birkenau, are located.

On October 6, the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah (ten "Days of Repentance") began and much of the media coupled the coverage of the annual event with the Auschwitz nun situation. None took the trouble to explain that the first of the ten "Days of Repentance" is known as Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) when all the world must tremble in judgment before the throne of the almighty god of the Jews.

The good news: not 6,000,000

As indicated, the world Jewish community took the opportunity of the nuns at Auschwitz to repeat through the



media that 6,000,000 Jews had been killed in the Nazi holocaust. However, investigative and scholarly studies undertaken during the last fifty years have clearly pronounced this a little south of the truth. A number of extensive studies have been made to track the movement of Jews out of central Europe during the ascendancy of Nazism, the exact number of deaths which occurred, where, and the cause therefor. Basically, the Jews rely on the research of Raul Hilberg, who is a collaborator in the *Jewish Encyclopedia Handbooks*, a professor of history at the University of Vermont, and the author of *The Destruction of the European Jews*. When the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, a nondenominational institution created by Congress in 1980, wanted definite statistics concerned with deaths in concentration camps, it went to Hilberg. Hilberg now estimates that the number of Jews who died in Europe, from whatever cause, during the period of perse-

cution was 1,003,392. The World Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation puts the figure at 1,593,292. Paul Rassinier, professor of history in the College d'enseignement general at Belfort, Academie de Besançon, France, and author of *Les Drame des Juifs Europeen*, upon whom the revisionist historians rely, accepts both figures and simply calls for more clarification. Dr. Rassinier himself was arrested by the Gestapo on October 30, 1943, and confined in the German concentration camps at Buchenwald and Dora until the end of the war in 1945. This is a far cry from an alleged 6,000,000.

It goes without emphasizing that no one should have been interred, much less killed, or become victims of any sort of misguided activity (from deliberate extermination by Fascist or Nazi governments through an Allied saturation bombing and starvation campaign) simply because of their political convictions, their ethnic associations, their race, or their sex.

Over and over again in the analysis of the situation, one compelling fact becomes clear. The Germans had nowhere near the train capacity to haul 6,000,000 people to concentration camp points. Had the Germans attempted to house, clothe, and feed 6,000,000 Jews plus millions of others, the activity would have paralyzed their military operations.

The records of Auschwitz indicate that only 363,000 persons were registered there from January 1940 to February 1945. Of those, in January 1945, the Germans evacuated 80,000 persons from Auschwitz to the west because of the advance of the Russian troops. The Russians found 150,000 alive in the Auschwitz camp when they took the city. Sharon Baron, holder of the chair of Jewish History, Columbia University, reported that the Russian troops found that there were 700,000 Jews in Poland after World War II. During the Eichmann trial, the World Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation at Paris put this figure at 500,000, and the

Institute of Jewish Affairs at 400,000.

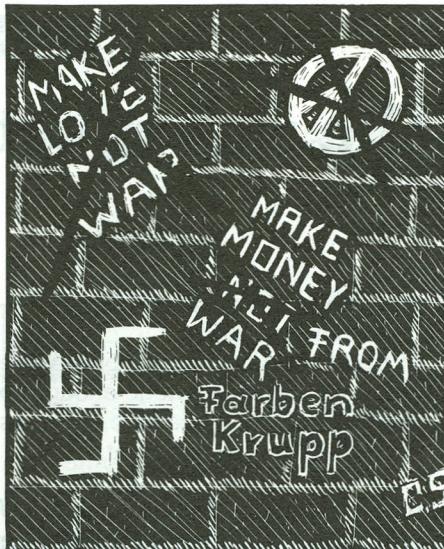
The Allies' contribution

During the last months of the war the saturation bombings of the Allies (United States and Britain) paralyzed the transport and communications systems of Germany. Not only did no food reach many of the camps, there was no food in many cities. Starvation claimed the population of Germany everywhere. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Geneva, Switzerland, in 1948 reported that the majority of the deaths in the camps were from the Allied blockade and what the ICRC termed "the barbarous aerial warfare of the Allies." The extensive civilian saturation bombing of Dresden alone in February 1945 killed over 800,000 in that area. Bodies were piled and burned in heaps of four to five hundred for several weeks.

One needs to remember that it was the Allies who firebombed Tokyo, Japan, and Dresden, Germany, who dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and who introduced saturation bombing of civilian targets first in May 1940.

The German National Socialist policy relative to the Jews favored their emigration out of the German homeland to obtain the goal of a *Judenfrei* (Jew-free) nation. The World Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation issued figures in 1939 which indicated that by that date 300,000 of the 510,000 Jews in Germany had emigrated. Apparently by that year the great majority of German Jews had bid farewell to Germany with a sizable proportion of their assets.

The good news for the Jews of the world is that they did not lose as many of "the clan" as they had thought they lost. Central Europe was, substantially, cleared of Jews, but that was primarily through emigration. The high death rate, from starvation, in the camps during the last months of the war was due largely to the "Allied extermination policies." Perhaps that is why the United



States continues to send Israel \$6 billion a year as a gift; guilt has its obligation.

Why the figure of 6,000,000?

Germany pays to Israel recompense sums calculated on the basis of 6,000,000 dead. Of those 6,000,000, it is now evident from both Jewish and revisionist sources that four-fifths were alive at the end of the war *and countable*. In October 1989, East Germany also agreed to pay reparations to Israel based on the count of 6,000,000 dead. Remember that Israel did not exist as a nation between 1939 and 1945. Payments are not going to the families of those who died. It is immediately apparent why Jewish spokesmen cling to that figure. It is often glossed over that the camps were *labor camps*, especially that at Auschwitz. To run the large industrial complexes, cheap or free labor was necessary. Axiomatically it would have been insane of the Germans to deliberately and rapidly kill off the labor force. Krupp, Farben, and other German industrialists are still held in high regard throughout the world. They are not making reparation payments to anyone anywhere at all: not to the Jews or the Poles who were incarcerated at Auschwitz, not to any other nationalities, ethnic groups, or political party remnants of anyone incarcerated there, or who died in that camp. Their profits are inviolate: not human lives.

Others

Besides the Jews, the Gypsies were almost completely decimated, claiming to have lost 3,500,000. A total of 50,000,000 lives were lost in World War II. The venture cost \$25,000,000,000,000.

From the end of World War II until the present day, the world has been turned into an armed camp, with militarism rampant, now entrenched as a permanent way of life, in every nation. Of men, women, children, the Russians lost 20,000,000 in the war. The German nation lost 6,000,000. Poland lost 5,000,000. Austria lost 1,000,000. England lost 2,000,000. Japan lost 2,000,000. China lost 3,500,000.

Back to the drawing board

But when all of the clamor over the Carmelite nuns at Auschwitz had died down, anyone taking a good look at what happened will discover that nothing has been gained on either side. The wily pope has again put off the ultimate conference with the Jews over the position of the Roman Catholic church during World War II. The nuns have not been moved — and if they are, ultimately, the Jews may need to pay for the moving.

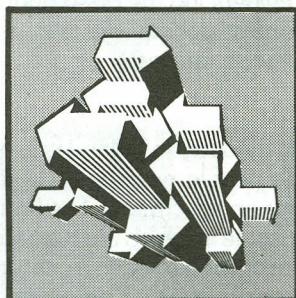
One columnist in attempting to make an analysis saw the entire series of occurrences as evidencing the dissolution of Roman Catholic dogma and the ascendancy of Jewish interests.

Reality

The building industry in Poland is in a shambles, with people needing to wait twenty years for an apartment. The first two-year time frame in which the Roman Catholic side promised to build a center was totally unrealistic. The price, \$2,000,000, was also outside of the reach of the church. Glemp has insisted that renegotiations, which now may actually be scheduled, will include terms and time which are realistic. His estimate was that "it will take a few years," and that it will. This war of words and of wills between Jews and Roman Catholics simply revealed to the world what occurs when an immovable object meets with an irresistible force: a facade depicting a solution is erected, and there is nothing behind the facade. And those who rant and rage over religion are completely out of touch with reality.

The red question

**What's the retort to the claim:
All Atheists are communists.**



So you're having a hard time dealing with the religious zanies who bug you with what you feel are stupid questions? Talk back. Send the question you hate most and American Atheists will provide scholarly, tart, humorous, short, belligerent, or fun-poking answers. Get into the verbal fray; it's time to "talk back" to religion.

Bert Schorlemmer, retired sign painter from Texas, replies:

In Russia, maybe. In this country, we are the only group patriotic enough to put forth an effort to keep the churches from running our government.

Gipson Arnold, assistant director of the Houston Chapter of American Atheists, replies:

Hogwash. Some of us are anarchists. Ayn Rand was an Atheist and an outspoken proponent of laissez-faire capitalism. I know a lot of Atheists who are definitely not communists.

Richard A. Busemeyer, a Life Member of American Atheists, replies:

Saying all Atheists are communists is like saying that all Blacks are thieves or that all Jews are crooked or that all Poles are stupid. Atheists come in all varieties, just the same as other categories of people.

Norm R. Allen, Jr., a Black historian from Maryland, replies:

This is as foolish as saying that all Baptists are Christians and that therefore all Christians are Baptists. This is typical theistic logic. Some of the most brilliant defenders of capitalism and democracy have been religious skeptics (e.g., Voltaire, Ayn Rand, Robert Green Ingersoll, Thomas Paine, Andrew Carnegie, Thomas Edison, etc.).

Robert Bandonis, writer and school teacher from Pennsylvania, replies:

Nonsense! I'm a Democrat. If you were taught that all Atheists are communists, I feel sorry that your school had such an inadequate course in political history. Did you go to parochial school?

Madalyn O'Hair, founder of American Atheists, replies:

Communism is a socio-economic political system. Atheism is a position taken in respect to religion. There is no comparison between an apple and an orange.

Additionally this entails the use of a pejorative in order to head off a substantive analysis of two competing ideas.

What we have here is a question which reflects the need of the capitalist socio-economic political system to degrade all other socio-economic political systems in order to be assumed to represent the best. It is the old ploy of the White man trying to remain on top by calling the Black man a "nigger" when that pejorative has nothing to do with equating the qualities of the two.

Atheism hasn't anything in the world to do with communism, or fascism, or capitalism, or kingships. But the citizens of the United States have been carefully programmed by their government to hate communism. In order to avoid examining capitalism and communism side by side, the advocates of capitalism have simply been name-calling. In a parallel analysis between the two systems, communism would probably have more appeal to the average man; therefore that analysis will never be permitted.

R. Murray-O'Hair, editor of the American Atheist, replies:

If every Atheist in America sent in their dues to the Communist party tomorrow, it would not make the Bible one word truer or Jehovah one atom realer.

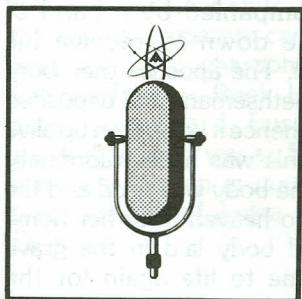
Upcoming questions

- What do you think about reincarnation?
- You'll burn in hell.
- What is the purpose of our existence, if there is no god?
- Jesus died for you.
- What's wrong with prayer in the schools?

How would you talk back to those statements? Send your replies (limit 200 words) to:

"Talking Back"
P. O. Box 140195
Austin, TX 78714-0195

An investigation into the life of Jesus turns up myths and lies.



When the first installment of a regularly scheduled, fifteen-minute, weekly American Atheist radio series on KLBJ radio (a station in Austin, Texas, owned by then-President Lyndon Baines Johnson) hit the airwaves on June 3, 1968, the nation was shocked. The programs had to be submitted weeks in advance and were heavily censored. The regular production of the series ended in September 1977, when no further funding was available.

The following is the text of "American Atheist Radio Series" program No. 349, first broadcast on July 5, 1975.

Madalyn O'Hair

New Testament forgeries

Back at the turn of the century, a man by the name of Joseph Wheless attempted to prove that everything about the Bible was a forgery, and I have been exploring some of his contentions here during the last several weeks.

In order to look at the New Testament, Wheless believes that one must first accept, or tentatively assume, certain matters to be true. He attempts to sketch the life of Jesus Christ as one of these facts, but has difficulties with that. Let us look at some of this.

Jesus was a native of Galilee (Matt. 2:23; 13:54-55), or else he was a native of Judaea (John 4:43-44). He was born in the days of Herod the king (Matt. 2:1); or else at another date, thirteen years later when Cyrenius was governor of Syria (Luke 2:1-7). There are destructive contradictions in his lineage and parentage which have been the subject of much discussion for a thousand years. In one report (Matt. 1:1-16) there were twenty-eight generations from David to the time of the Jews being carried to Babylon, and fourteen generations from there to Jesus Christ, if his father was Joseph. However, in another report (Luke 3:23-38) there were only seventy-eight generations from Adam to Jesus, again counting Joseph as his father; and of these there were forty-two generations from David — but the lineage is different, all the fathers are not the same, and in any event, Joseph was not Christ's father. The Holy Ghost did that.

But aside from that, Jesus became a Jewish sectarian religious teacher of the zealot reformer type. He was so zealous that his own family thought him insane and sent out to apprehend him (Mark 3:21,31); and many thought of him as possessed by the devil and mad (John 10:20) — his own disciples thought him mad (John 2:17).

His ministry lasted one year according to the first three Gospels and three years according to the fourth. He repeated throughout the ministry that he

had come only to his own Jewish people (Matt. 15:24, Acts 3:25-26, Acts 13:46, Rom. 15:8), and he enjoined his twelve apostles only to preach to the Jews (Matt. 10:5-6). He himself declined to assist a Gentile (Matt. 15:22-28).

His own ministry said that there was to be an immediate end of the world (Matt. 10:7, Matt. 16:28, Mark 9:1, Luke 9:27, Mark 13:30) and he exhorted his disciples to teach the same (Matt. 10:23, Matt. 26:63-64, Mark 14:61-62). Of course, there were to be none but Jews in heaven or in the new Kingdom of Heaven on the earth (John 4:22). These were to be 144,000 Jews, the "sealed" saints, who alone constituted the original Jewish Kingdom of God (Rev. 7:3-8).

We use this short outline. We find then that nothing was written on the subject during the generation of Jesus. But the earth did not come to an end, and soon the failing new Jewish faith was offered to the pagans of countries round. The "Word" was spread by mouth. Written books did not come into existence at first at all.

It is very difficult to indicate when the writings began, so we need to find out first when they were not written, when they were not available. But, for one hundred and fifty years, little or nothing besides the Old Testament and pagan oracles were known or quoted. Indeed up to the year 150, no Christian writer quoted the Gospels at all, with the exception of Papias (A.D. 70-155), who spoke of a narrative by Mark and a collection of sayings of Jesus.

There are twenty-three books in the New Testament from Acts to Revelation. Of these, in these, there is not a solitary reference to or a word of quotation from, any of the four Gospels, the first four books in the New Testament. There is scarcely a trace of the wonderful career and miracles of Jesus, and not a word of his gospel or teachings is either mentioned or quoted. The Epistles, indeed, preach Christ crucified from oral tradition as the basis of the propagandists' own gospel. But the



Joseph Wheless

Gospels, Epistles, Acts, by every one of the twelve apostles;
Official documents of church law and government, written in Greek, by the apostles;
Records of the earliest popes and apostolic succession;
And scores of other pious forged documents.

One work is especially interesting. Forged in the name of John the Apostle, it records how all the apostles were preternaturally transported from different quarters of the globe to the Virgin's deathbed, those who had died being resurrected for the purpose. A Jew who dared to touch the sacred body instantly lost both hands, but they were restored through the mediation of the apostles. Christ, accompanied by a band of angels, came down to receive his mother's soul. The apostles then bore the body to Gethsemane and deposited it in a tomb, whence it was taken up alive to heaven. This was an extraordinary miracle, for the body was dead and the soul carried to heaven from her home and the dead body laid in the grave where it came to life again for the heaven trip.

Wheless cites scores of these works. I am stunned by the authorities he quotes. The church, today, relies on the word of its early historians in so many things — but never tells us that the historians also accepted other ideas. For instance, Eusebius, on whom the church relies greatly, vouches that he himself translated from the Syriac documents in the archives of Edessa. These included, in three documents,

1. A letter of Abgar to Christ,
2. Christ's reply,
3. A picture painted from life, of Christ.

I am absolutely stunned by this. If we cannot believe Eusebius on this matter, how can we believe him on any matter? It should be mentioned that Abgar

written Gospel of Jesus Christ, his life and words and deeds, was unknown. Indeed the apostle Paul fulminates against anyone who would teach any interpretation but his own, saying:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (Gal. 1:8)

From all of this, the conclusion is inevitable: that when the twenty-three Acts and Epistles were written, none of the four Gospel biographies of Jesus had yet seen the light. The Acts and Epistles, therefore, with Revelation, were written before any of the Gospel biographies.

And as the long years passed and one generation of disappointed Messianic Jews after another was gathered to their fathers, the believers in the Second Coming grew restless and even in the New Testament asked questions as in 2 Peter 3:4:

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

And, of course, they still continue to the date of this broadcast.

It was when this impatience began, at a critical juncture, that Wheless believes in an effort to revive and stimulate the jaded hopes of the Jewish believers and to spread the propaganda amongst the pagans, the written Christ-tales began to be worked up. There were at hand, the pagan oracles, the Jewish literature, and other apocryphal and forged writings.

So, whereas the Old Testament depended on "inspiration" and "revelation" for authenticity, the New Testament is silent on this subject. And it was not until the middle of the second century that the New Testament was attached to the Old Testament. The dubious and

disputed status of the sacred writings was, indeed, not settled until the Council of Trent, in the year 1546. It was at that time that the Latin Vulgate Version was declared to be authentic and *almost* infallible. But a number of these books were bitterly disputed and their authenticity and inspiration denied by the leading reformers, Luther, Grotius, Calvin. As we have it today, there are a number of entire books doubted, and these are the Epistle to the Hebrews, that of James, the Second and Third of John, Jude, and Apocalypse. The doubted "portions" are three in number: the closing section of St. Mark's Gospel, 16:9-20, some verses in Luke (22:43-44) and in John 7:53 to 8:11.

There are Christian apocryphal writings. In general they imitate the books of the New Testament, and with a few exceptions, fall under the description of being Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses. Some of the material then available included the following:

A gospel written by Jesus Christ's own hand;
Letters and portraits of Jesus Christ and his personal correspondence;
Letters written by his virgin mother;
Pilate's official report to the Emperor of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, with Pilate's confession of faith;
The reply of Tiberius and the trial of Pilate;
Official documents of the Roman Senate about Jesus;



Left: A portrayal of the myth of the Assumption (the Virgin's body being taken alive into heaven).

Right: Saint Veronica displays the veil with the face of Christ miraculously imprinted on it — despite the fact that there was no Saint Veronica.

was not a personal name of a king of Edessa, but a generic title of all the rulers of that small state, just as we call the Roman emperors caesars, and the kings of Egypt pharaohs. But, in his *Church History*, Book I, Chapter 13, pages 63 forward, Eusebius blithely states that Jesus was so famous that he was known even in countries remote from the land of Judea and that from Edessa,

King Abgar sent Him a letter asking Him to come and heal him of his disease. But our Saviour at the time he asked Him did not comply with his request. Yet He deigned to give him a letter in reply.

So Eusebius went to Edessa where the material was, he says, "taken by us from the archives," and "translated from Aramaic into Greek."

The actual letter follows where the king declares:

Abgar the Black, sovereign of the country, to Jesus, the Good Saviour, who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem.

It is all there — the entire letter. He implores Jesus to heal him of an

ailment. Jesus answers the letter saying he must first die and be "taken up" and that he will then send one of his disciples to not alone heal the disease of the Abgar — that is, the king — but will see that the disciple gives him salvation also. This all came to pass then in the year 340, when the disciple Thaddeus went to Edessa and did wonderful works. Of course, the Abgar had been dead for probably three hundred years then and the disciple was a little late getting there. But how can I now ever believe anything that Eusebius has written? And why did not the church make this clear to me when I studied Eusebius under the tutelage of the religious community? Why was this part of his writing kept from me? Actually, Wheless makes me feel like a damn fool for ever having accepted any of it.

Eusebius, Wheless says, "is thus seen to have been a most circumstantial liar and a well-skilled forger for God." From this one lie spouted others like toadstools, a whole literature of various books concerning Abgar the King and Thaddeus the Apostle, in which are preserved for posterity a series of five letters written by Abgar to Tiberius Caesar and to neighboring potentates, endorsing Jesus and his healing power in something like testimonials. What staggers me more is that Tiberius answers

saying, "Pilate has officially informed us of the miracles of Jesus."

These crass forgeries were welcomed into the church and for fifteen centuries have gone unrebuked by either pope or church. Until the beginning of our present century, strong support was made for these letters throughout England by the archbishops there. The portrait of Jesus, reported to have been sent by Jesus himself to the king, is now displayed at both Rome and Genoa and is in many homes in England, in reproduction, available from the church.

Of course, this picture is not quite the same as the likeness of the features of Christ miraculously impressed upon a cloth when a woman of Jerusalem offered Jesus a linen cloth to wipe his face as he was carrying his cross towards Calvary. At first this likeness was called in Latin, *vera icon*, which means true image. But in ordinary language it soon became *veronica*; and by degrees popular imagination mistook the word for the name of a person. And so the tale of Veronica's Veil was formed and from this emerges St. Veronica, the woman of Jerusalem who offered Jesus a linen cloth to wipe his face.

Here is myth-in-the-making. Yet the pope displayed and vouched for the fake Veil of St. Veronica on March 19, 1930, in Rome. *

Abyss

Ghost,
Returned from the dead —
Or at least near dead —
Shocked back
From premature grave
By 400 volts!

Wildly irregular,
Shivering, quivering,
Fibrillating heart
Disciplined;
Whacked,
Smacked back to rhythm
By firmly placed
Socks on the chest.

White ghost
On white sheets,
Coming to,
To the sight of
White coated ghosts
Shoving all too real IV's
Into blue, finely webbed veins.

Must've shaken my fist
At old bastard death
'Least half a dozen times
That scary night in ICU,
As he tried to snatch me
From nauseous, waking terror,
Or sometimes fitful sleep
Back to that oblivion
That made my consciousness nightmare.

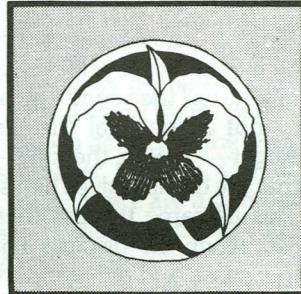
Falling, falling,
Whirling, whirling,
Down, down,
Into that pit
Of infinite, absolute blackness
Deeper than deepest sleep.

Ghost come back to testify:
No mystical experience;
No light at the end of the tunnel
No long departed loved ones
On the other side
Beckoning or turning me back
Nada!
Nada!

Drusilla Davis

Internalizing

Samuel Evins Brown



Storytime is over

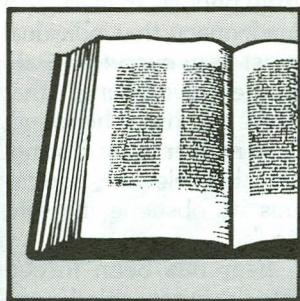
The Garden is overgrown with weeds
its tree gnarled and fruitless
Small serpents belly-muscle
in the dust of ancient lore . . .
speechless as they always were
No one capers fig-leafed
to a voice that whines or threatens . . .

The gate latch seals with rust
and apples rot in Eden

Angeline Bennett

Freud — as scientist and Atheist

A Godless Jew triumphantly vindicates Sigmund Freud, refuting the smears of his religious foes and dispelling any doubt concerning his genius or his Atheism.



A Godless Jew: Freud, Atheism, and The Making of Psychoanalysis

by Peter Gay
New Haven, Connecticut:
Yale University Press
1987, 182 pages.

A Godless Jew is available from Waldenbooks outlets, or from Yale University Press, 92A Yale Sta., New Haven, CT 06520. Hardcover \$17.95, paperback (1989), \$9.95.

Fast paced, highly readable, superbly researched — all laudatory adjectives which express the exemplary writing of one of today's leading scholars. Peter Gay, Sterling Professor of History at Yale University, has given the world a labor of love. He disproves the draconic denunciations of contemporary Christians who libel one of the world's greatest psychoanalysts: Sigmund Freud. All superlative sentences that come to mind barely do justice to a perfectly captured theme, a brilliant study that quickens the mind and moves the emotions of mortals.

Gay's flawless research and adeptness at translations from the German is sometimes inflammatory. It is always controversial to those who have pre-judged one of the world's premier Atheists: Sigmund Freud.

A Godless Jew goes beyond the suffocating saccharine accounts of pseudoapologists who hide their hatred behind clerical collars and religious robes. Gay's book knocks the teeth out of the biting denunciation of fanatical fundamentalist foes of Freud's role and impact on contemporary civilization.

This small but powerful book exposes the hypocrisy of the religious right and Bible Belted bigots and similar boisterous bozos (who are usually one and the same), so that one can no longer doubt that Atheism is the hallmark of the intellectual and the wave of the future that will wash away the legends and idiocies of the present and past enchainment with prayer beads and hidden behind incense and ritual ravings.

A Godless Jew is not a biography. Rather, Gay has given the world an in-depth study of why Sigmund Freud termed religion "bigotry and stupidity." Freud advertised his unbelief every time he could find, or make, an opportunity.

Freud wrote in one of his most important works, *The Future of an Illusion* (*Die Zukunft einer Illusion*):

Criticism has gnawed away at the probative power of religious docu-

ments; natural science has shown up the errors they contain; comparative research has been struck by the fatal resemblance of the religious conceptions we revere to the mental products of primitive peoples and times.

On this rock of reality Gay's book is based with joy equal to that of Freud.

Freud's parents had already freed themselves from Judaism before he was born. Imbued with the antitheistic authors and statesmen of his day, Freud quickly found himself agreeing with them, especially Marx's thesis that "criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism."

As he attempted to fashion his ideas of psychoanalysis into a coherent and acceptable "science" of the times, he was often attacked by the theistic psychologists and psychiatrists as having originated merely a doctrinaire "sect." But he held fast to Atheism and the title of the book is derived from his own sarcastic remark to a Swedish minister, "Quite by the way, why did none of the devout create psychoanalysis? Why did one have to wait for a completely godless Jew?"

It was as an Atheist that Freud developed psychoanalysis and it was upon Atheism that this human behavioral analysis science was predicated.

Throughout the book Gay emphasizes this.

Freud, however, continued to identify himself as a Jew, especially during the period of rising Nazism in Europe. It was apparently an ethnic consideration for him rather than a religious one. Too many of his critics have pointed out that he came from the Jewish culture in his nation, his patients were all Jews, and that psychoanalysis is a "Jewish science" or a Jewish discipline.

This is by-and-large an attempted anti-Semitic repudiation of his technique, and it has failed because Freud in the ultimate analysis accepted only *Wissenschafts-religion*, the "religion of science" which was for him no religion at all.

A militant Atheist, Sigmund Freud wrote with delight, “Never in my private life nor in my writings, have I ever made a secret of being an out-and-out unbeliever.”

Flatly calling religion “the enemy,” Freud found all phobia and all prohibitions against natural interaction and being, fostered by a festering religion insanity — in particular by Judaism and Christianity. Because of this, Gay points out, Freud became unusually unpopular. This intensified when Freud exposed evangelical missions to “Christianize” so-called “pagan” people as exercises in desperation, underscoring the alienation of the masses and foreign cultures from the strangling hold of established theocrats and churches.

Freud was equally hard on papal encyclicals and predatory papal posturing. He saw in the Vatican and its never-ending stream of sleazy incumbents a diabolical and deliberate intervention into every aspect of life and love — all to the detriment of humankind.

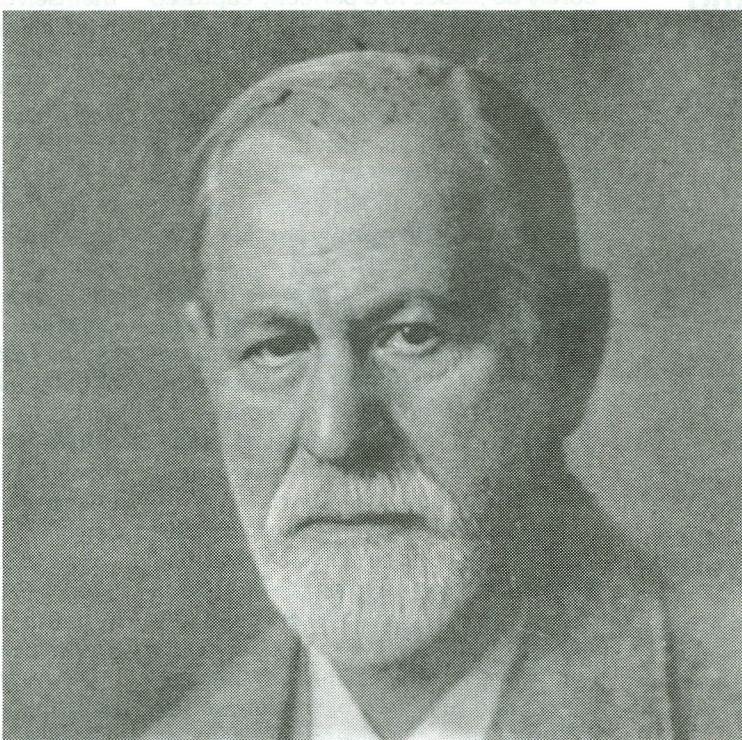
Freud blasted religious exercise and prayer as an absurdity and dynamited, Gay reports, the demons of divinity with measured words and thought. The “Satan” that exists is in the minds of those who delight in self-masochistic abuse. Freud argued, Gay notes, that psychoanalysis is the only escape from the ministerial mindmash. Freud screams the words of Voltaire, this is the time to “crush the infamous thing!” (*Écrasez l’infâme!*)

Freud fought through the fog of biblical intimidations and religious incantations. Ever quick to expose the quackery of quivering clerics, brain-numbed nuns, and protesting pastors, Freud wrote that the weak in mind and education cling to religion because they want to avoid (1) personal responsibility and (2) individual decision making. Both are a testimony to their self-corruption under the dung heap of hortatory holiness and

religious ranting.

A militant Atheist, Sigmund Freud wrote with delight, “Never in my private life nor in my writings, have I ever made a secret of being an out-and-out unbeliever.” This great doctor mourned those who would not think for themselves.

There is no shame to loving life, Freud affirmed. Agony comes only when normal people surrender the pleasures of



the earth in hope for a heaven no one has ever seen or returned from.

Declaring he was an Atheist because of psychoanalysis, Freud urged people to talk about their repressions (most of which are sexual because theology from its inception has been antisexual), and declared that appreciating themselves, analyzing their own fears and dreams, they too could discard the worn and threadbare god-myth.

Gay shows how much of his own theory Freud personally acknowledged came from the eighteenth-century philo-

sophes and nineteenth-century scientists. Coupling Voltaire’s wisdom with the sarcasm of Spinoza, Sigmund Freud drew in the myth-slayer, Charles Darwin. When one can disprove creation, Freud penned, one can disprove the Bible and god.

All eighteenth-century enlightened thinkers, Freud argued, looked at the world as it is. Accepting reality they freed themselves from superstition.

Through psychoanalysis, they discovered themselves and liked what they saw.

Freud asked only that all others do the same. When they came to self-awareness and self-acceptance, they too, would be free at last.

Freud spelled out a fundamental truth: if the patient would free himself or herself of all hang-ups, from phobias to feelings of inadequacy, that individual must “say everything, absolutely everything,” that came into his or her mind, “no matter how boring, trivial, irrelevant, scurrilous or obscene it might be.”

Fear has been forced into the human mind by religion. Animals don’t know the mind-destroying concept of “sin” and thus live more contentedly and in greater harmony than does humankind.

To speak about fear and understand fear frees the mind from the slave shackles of religion. For, as Freud wrote, religion is the heart of fear, and on it builds its unholy inquisition.

Gay captures the very essence of Freud in this slim volume. Like Freud, Gay also exposes contemporary theology for what it is: a sewer.

A Godless Jew is a “must-read” for all who want to be free. — Arthur Frederick Ide

Atheists in foxholes

One soldier observes Atheism come naturally on the battlefield.



"Me Too" is a feature designed to showcase short essays written by readers in response to topics recently covered by the *American Atheist* or of general interest to the Atheist community.

Essays submitted to "Me Too" (P.O. Box 140195, Austin, TX 78714-0195) should be 650 to 1500 words long.

In reference to the "Ask A.A." question concerning Atheist veterans in your March 1989 issue, I am glad to respond to the old cliché, as so frequently used by some Christian clergymen, that "There is no Atheist in a foxhole."

As a young man at age twenty, I sought adventure and travel and quit a good-paying job (in those days) as a skilled paper-cutter, to enlist in the regular army early in 1940 as a private of infantry, with my eventual station to be at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Although my IQ qualified me for most any branch of voluntary service, I chose the infantry, "Queen of Battles," wanting the most "rugged" service I could get. Two years prior to service entry, I had become an Atheist.

Well, I got it — and then some — within the then "old Army" and after experiencing the Japanese sneak attack on our barracks on December 7, 1941. In the following year, I was gradually promoted to a platoon sergeant of infantry. Soon top noncommissioned officers were being sent back to the United States to train various newly-formed infantry divisions, and I was one of them who helped to train recruits of the Forty-second Rainbow Division. I went to France with that division late in 1944.

During the Battle of the Bulge, units of our division were split up to "plug up" various defensive positions. Finally, at one town, named Hatten, our lone battalion faced two German Panzer Division attacks for three days and two nights of fierce fighting. After the war, we were the only unit in our entire Forty-second Rainbow Division to receive the presidential citation for our defense, and one of my men, Pfc. Vito Bertoldo, received the Medal of Honor, personally, from President Truman, for his action at Hatten. Overwhelming superior forces of Germans wiped out our entire battalion of about fourteen hundred men, with only two officers and about eighty-five enlisted men escaping capture. About two-thirds of our battalion were either killed or wounded. What of us

that were left alive (and I was one of them) had to surrender to the Germans, after we had run out of ammunition and a lack of any artillery or other support.

Now, as to "Atheists in foxholes," I can truthfully state, *I never once even thought of the idea of calling on some imagined god to protect me from all the carnage that only an infantryman, during any war, might see about him.* On the contrary, I was too busy, not only fighting for my own life, but all of the lives of the fifty-two men under my command. *Never once, also, did I ever see or hear any of my men appeal to a "higher authority" (god), although, I would estimate about one-quarter of my men did attend chaplain services prior to any combat expectations — and then only to find some of them amid the wounded or killed at a later time, as well as some of them who did not attend religious services.* Later as a POW and under what I would call worse conditions (if one can ever say that being a POW was worse than combat), *I only saw one man who daily took his rosary beads out to pray with.* Neither did I see any man pray while we were all locked up in a train boxcar for three days without food or water, or toilet facilities, before reaching the POW camp and our about four months of incarceration, before finally the First Ukrainian Russian Army liberated us on April 23, 1945.

Briefly, in summing up all of the above, as an Atheist I never once saw god or any of his "angels" on the battlefield or in a POW camp. All I ever saw was simply man's inhumanity to man, amid a "Hell On Earth," that an infantryman might see, plus all the massacres of fellow humans; all without any known interventions of a god of any kind — and most certainly not ever in a foxhole.

— Alvin R. Cahoon
Former Platoon Sergeant of Infantry
Company A, 242nd Infantry
Regiment
42nd Rainbow Division
and ex-POW

Selected Letters to the Editor

God as a mushroom

Not so "mythical" is the "soma plant" which Margaret Bhatty mentions in her May "Report from India." The "soma nectar" (cup of *amrit* brew) comes from one of several entheogens ("god within us"). Soma has been determined to be *Amanita muscaria*, a mushroom used in ancient times as an anaesthetic.

Soma, the mysterious sacred mushroom, has been known from the beginning of history. It's the Holy Plant, a botanical divinity, miraculously conceived — god and "son of god," the key to heaven and the door of eternity.

Today the soma plant/*Amanita muscaria* may provide a key to such earthly remedies as treatment of epilepsy, schizophrenia, and postoperative pain.

Ann D. Robertson
Virginia

Mr. Petersburg?

It has just occurred to me that the 1990 American Atheist National Convention is being held in a city named for "Saint" Peter. Atheists do not recognize the title of "saint," to do so would first require giving recognition to a "god." Therefore, I am proposing that we rename the city of "Saint Petersburg" during the time of our convention.

After all, if Phoenix can re-name Sun "Devil" Stadium upon the occasion of the pope's visit, Atheists can certainly rename a city that derives its name from a "saint."

Margie D. Wait
Colorado

Spreading the truth

I enjoy reading the *American Atheist* each month, as I celebrate my eighty-fifth birthday (I was born September 28, 1904).

I have been an Atheist from birth, thanks to my parents who taught me and had the courage to break away from Roman Catholicism and coming here to America from Czechoslovakia many

years ago.

Someone else evidently also enjoys reading my *American Atheist*, as each month the round seal is either torn or cut open.

At first I was obsessed and wanted to report this to the postal authorities, but after considering it I decided it was better for those so interested to read the interesting and actual truth rather than to destroy it as was the case in Alexandria where the Christians destroyed the remainder of 700,000 volumes in A.D. 391.

Robert Draznik
Arkansas

Teasing the Christians

I refer to the letter "Silly Sounds" by Allen Mostoway (March 1989).

Here are some more irreverent suggestions to put off the Christian zombies and make them look silly:

1. The Christians believe God is the omnipotence, and the omniscience, but we think he is the omnibus because he takes the Christians for a ride.
2. Jesus is the son of dog (spelt backwards).
3. "Dogs and evangelists will be shooed away" (notice to be displayed outside gates).

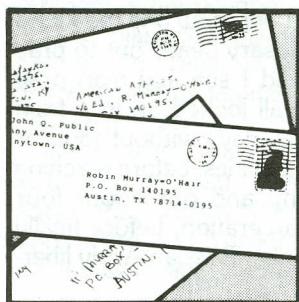
Perhaps, someone ought to come out with a book containing insults for the Christians — in line with Louis A. Safian's famous, or infamous, *Two Thousand Insults for All Occasions*.

C. H. Tan
Malaysia

A pro-choice god?

The pro-lifers, against abortion, seem to feel they have the Christian god on their side. I believe their Bible and god tells them otherwise.

The Bible describes life's beginning at "first breath" (Gen. 2:7). Furthermore,



"Letters to the Editor" should be either questions or comments of general concern to Atheists or to the Atheist community. Submissions should be brief and to the point. Space limitations allow that each letter should be three hundred words or, preferably, less. Please confine your letters to a single issue only. Mail them to: *American Atheist*, P. O. Box 140195, Austin, TX 78714-0195.

all of the Jews in the Bible have measured viability from the date of birth rather than age plus nine months, which pro-lifers have adopted. (One non-Christian early religion does follow this practice.)

Nothing about abortion or the fetus is described in the Bible. This antiabortion dogma has been added to the Christian code of wrongdoings by overzealous fundamentalists in recent times.

Furthermore, it seems that their god is teaching them otherwise in that spontaneous abortion or miscarriage occurs naturally for a variety of reasons (more than half of all the fertilized ova are lost before the end of the first trimester). Many natural abortions are a consequence of fetal defects, and early losses of the fetus are usually without any complication. If god is against abortion, why does he cause this phenomenon to occur in womankind?

Robert Dickman
Maryland

The final battle

I received your highly-recommended book *Spiritual Warfare* by Sara Diamond. Wow! I came to some few of the facts she exposes, but she lays it *all* on the line!

Anyone purporting to be an Atheist has to read it! No four ways about that!

I want to thank you, a thousand times over, for bringing this book to me. Man, it's dynamite!

We are a few, minuscule. We can't

hope to buck and defeat something like that criminal cabal. All we can do is to "hang in there," and stick together.

"Every dog has its day." Those SOBs are having *their* day.

All their efforts to save the dying capitalist-imperialist system are in vain. The world's poor, exploited, oppressed people are rebelling, revolting.

No, victory is *not* just around the corner, but it is certain.

This is a dying era, age. The "New Rome."

The final battle(s) will be bloody, protracted. The final outcome is certain. A new era is aborning.

Milan Rafayko
Kentucky

Definitions, star stuff, Zindler

I have the impression that some of us are getting the apples mixed up with the lemons, regarding the fighting with the dictionary publishers. Dictionaries are not meant to be objective. They are supposed to be informative. Most dictionary publishers of English have agreements with the grand-daddy of English words, namely *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, more commonly known as *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

For one of its definitions of the word Atheism, it gives the denial of the existence of a god. It gives the information that the word comes from both French and German precedents. It also gives

the information that its common English usage came about in approximately 1587, in the writing of Francis Bacon, who was born in London and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. It uses his quote, "A little philosophy inclineth men's minds to Atheism." The Oxford Dictionary was mainly compiled by members of Oxford's Corpus Christi College. Both Cambridge and Oxford University belonged to the Church of England. So what does one expect?

In regards to the letter of Marie Wood of Ohio, in the April *American Atheist*: The best response to her query of which I am aware is the beautiful fact that we are star stuff, and thus will ever be so. This is not a new idea, but thanks must be given to Carl Sagan for getting it wide publicity in his book *The Cosmic Connection*, published by Dell, in 1973.

Finally, I too am touched by the humor of Frank Zindler. His footnote on page 42 of the April issue was really funny. I mean the bit about the English alphabet. Tsk, tsk, Frank. All these years I had believed that the Roman alphabet was the underpinning for the English words in print.

Art Armstrong
California

In our columnist's defense, we must note that even Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary refers to the English alphabet, which does differ from the Latin alphabet on which it is based.

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Fleming's Collectibles: In the Shenandoah Valley at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains, 620 North Winchester Avenue, Waynesboro, Virginia. Antiques, collectibles, quilts. Home occupation.

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O'Hair Poster: Poster of Madalyn O'Hair, founder of American Atheists, with famous quotes, "No god ever gave man anything, nor answered any prayer" and "Religion has caused more misery than any other single idea." 17" x 22". \$3.50 postpaid. Product #3410. American Atheist Press, 7215 Cameron Rd., Austin, TX 78752-2973.

Take Your God and Shove It announces this blunt bumpersticker. Vinyl. \$1.50 postpaid. Product #3288. American Atheist Press, 7215 Cameron Rd., Austin, TX 78752-2973.

Publications

Catalog of American Atheist Press books and booklets. Send \$1. Write: A.A.P., 7215 Cameron Rd., Austin, TX 78752-2973.

November 1980 American Atheist: A small quantity of this issue is still available so avid collectors should send in their orders! Articles on Atheist activism in Utah and the evolution/creationism controversy. Excerpts from *The Woman's Bible* and Chapman Cohen's works. \$2.00 postpaid. Product #9630. American Atheist Press, 7215 Cameron Road, Austin, TX 78752-2973.

Announcements

Atheist doing research on non-theist community. Looking for people who are interested in participating. Please send correspondence and for questionnaire to: Sid Smith, P. O. Box 1542, East Lansing, MI 48826-1542.

Organizations

American Gay Atheists: P. O. Box 66711, Houston, TX 77266-6711. Serving the Gay & Lesbian Community. Dial-A-Gay-Atheist, Houston: (713) 880-4242; Dial-A-Gay-Atheist, New York: (718) 899-1737; Dial-A-Gay-Atheist, Chicago: (312) 255-2960. Publishes a monthly newsletter.

Methods of Moderation and Abstinence: An alternative to AA faith healing. Founded by Bill Talley. For information write: MOMA, P. O. Box 6120, Denver, CO 80206-0120.

Wanted

Old and used books, magazines, and pamphlets on Atheism, freethought, rationalism, skepticism, and agnosticism are needed for the Charles E. Stevens American Atheist Library and Archives. Those books you bought from Haldeman-Julius, Lewis, and the R.P.A. when you were young are now valuable to Atheist researchers. Send donations of books to: C.E.S.A.A.L.A., Inc., P. O. Box 14505, Austin, TX 78761-4505.

Bequests: Remember American Atheists when you make your will. For information on how to help the future of Atheism after your death, write: Project Wills, A.A.G.H.Q., P. O. Box 140195, Austin, TX 78714-0195.

Divine Racism

(Continued from page 21)

with religious ones. From the early associations of darkness with evil to the biblical doctrine of nonresistance to slavery, religion, through its guise of divine authority, has served as constant encouragement for the exploitation and humiliation of Black men and women throughout history. *

suggested

American Atheist introductory reading list



Literature on Atheism is very hard to find in most public and university libraries in the United States — and most of the time when you do find a book catalogued under the word *Atheism* it is a work *against* the Atheist position. Therefore we suggest the following publications which are available from American Atheist Press as an introduction

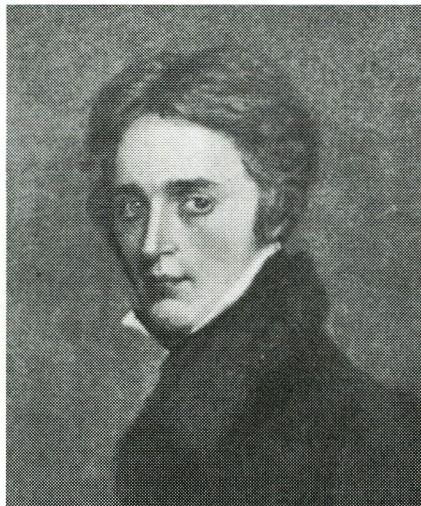
1. <i>Why I Am An Atheist</i> , including a history of materialism, by Madalyn O'Hair. Stapled. 39 pp. Product #5416	4.00
2. <i>The Case Against Religion: A Psychotherapist's View</i> by Dr. Albert Ellis. Stapled. 57 pp. #5096	4.00
3. <i>All the Questions You Ever Wanted to Ask American Atheists with All of the Answers</i> by Jon Murray and Madalyn O'Hair. Paperback. 248 pp. #5356	9.00
4. <i>What on Earth Is an Atheist!</i> by Madalyn O'Hair. Paperback. 288 pp. #5412	8.00
5. <i>An Atheist Speaks</i> by Madalyn O'Hair. Paperback. 321 pp. #5098	8.00
6. <i>All about Atheists</i> by Madalyn O'Hair. Paperback. 407 pp. #5097	8.00
7. <i>Ingersoll the Magnificent</i> by Joseph Lewis. Paperback. 342 pp. #5216	10.00
8. <i>Essays on American Atheism, vol. I</i> by Jon G. Murray. Paperback. 349 pp. #5349	10.00
9. <i>Essays on American Atheism, vol. II</i> by Jon G. Murray. Paperback. 284 pp. #5350	10.00
10. <i>Essays in Freethinking, vol. I</i> by Chapman Cohen. Paperback. 229 pp. #5052	9.00
11. <i>Essays in Freethinking, vol. II</i> by Chapman Cohen. Paperback. 240 pp. #5056	9.00
12. <i>Life Story of Auguste Comte</i> by F. J. Gould. Paperback. 179 pp. #5132	6.50
13. <i>The Logic and Virtue of Atheism</i> by Joseph McCabe. Stapled. 58 pp. #5280	4.00
14. <i>Atheist Truth vs. Religion's Ghosts</i> by Col. Robert G. Ingersoll. Stapled. 57 pp. #5156	4.00
15. <i>Some Reasons I Am a Freethinker</i> by Robert G. Ingersoll. Stapled. 37 pp. #5184	4.00
16. <i>Our Constitution — The Way It Was</i> by Madalyn O'Hair. Stapled. 70 pp. #5400	4.00
17. <i>American Atheist Heritage: Jefferson, Franklin, Lincoln, and Burbank</i> by Joseph Lewis. Stapled. 56 pp. #5212	4.00
18. <i>Fourteen Leading Cases on Education, Religion, and Financing Schools</i> . Paperback. 273 pp. #5500	5.00
19. <i>Sex Mythology</i> by Sha Rocco. Stapled. 55 pp. #5440	4.00
20. <i>Women and Atheism, The Ultimate Liberation</i> by Madalyn O'Hair. Stapled. 21 pp. #5420	3.50
21. <i>Christianity Before Christ</i> by John G. Jackson. Paperback. 237 pp. #5200	9.00
22. <i>The Bible Handbook</i> (All the contradictions, absurdities, and atrocities from the Bible) by G.W. Foote, W.P. Ball, John Bowden, and Richard M. Smith. Paperback. 372 pp. #5008	9.00
23. <i>The X-Rated Bible</i> by Ben Edward Akerley. Paperback. 428 pp. #5000	10.00

into the multifaceted areas of Atheism and state/church separation. To achieve the best understanding of thought in these areas the featured publications should be read in the order listed. These by no means represent our entire collection of Atheist and separationist materials.

All of the above publications are available at a special set price of \$125.00 — a savings of \$31 off the single issue price. Postage and handling is \$1.50 for orders under \$20.00; \$2.50 for orders over \$20.00. Texas residents please add 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ percent sales tax.

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.



"The same means that have supported every other popular belief, have supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, assassination, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is."

— Percy Bysshe Shelley
Notes to *Queen Mab*

